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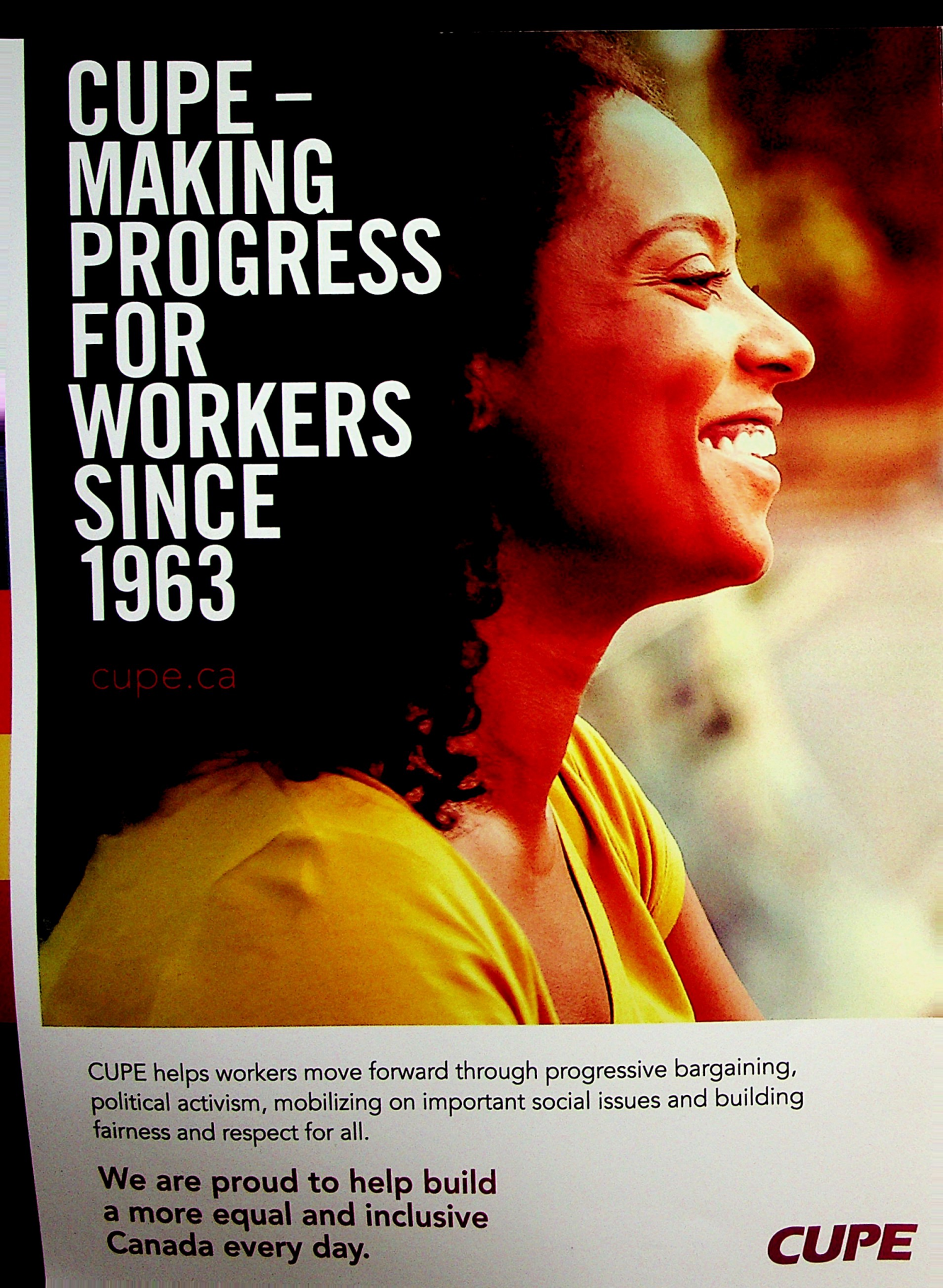
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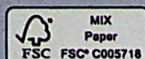
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Briarpatch publishes six thought-provoking, fire-breathing, riot-inciting issues a year. Fiercely independent and proudly polemical, *Briarpatch* delves into today's most pressing issues from a radical, grassroots perspective, always aiming to challenge and inspire its readers.

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briarpatch

FIERCELY INDEPENDENT

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A Pipeline to Regret

About two months ago, the day after Kinder Morgan announced it would suspend all non-essential spending on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, Christi Belcourt tweeted: "Seeing Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people stand together in BC and oppose Kinder Morgan is heartening. And it's working. Before bringing in the troops, the Feds will try to pay different groups off and hang trinkets out to divide. Stay united. #nokindermorgan." Now, all pretense of hanging trinkets has been swept off the table. Instead, Trudeau has slapped down \$4.5 billion to buy the 65-year-old assets of the Trans Mountain pipeline. If we factor in the \$7.5 billion to expand the pipeline, and other costs like financial assurances for spills, the *real* cost to the public has been estimated to be as high as \$15 to \$20 billion.

If you weren't convinced before – simply by being an air-breathing, water-drinking human being – it's now undeniable that we *all* have skin in this pipeline game. Trudeau has made us all potential shareholders in a leaky, aging piece of climate-cooking infrastructure.

In 2015, Trudeau won a majority on the strength of the youth vote: More 18- to 24-year-olds voted for the Liberals in every region of the country than for any other party, snatching seats from the NDP. The Liberals impressed young people on issues of marijuana legalization, youth jobs, affordable post-secondary education, LGBTQ+ rights, and – yes – the environment. This purchase is nothing less than a total betrayal of our collective future, and – as Ktunaxa and Secwepemc land defender Kanahus Manuel put it – a declaration of war on Indigenous peoples. Trudeau is banking on the hope that this will be a short-term hit to his political rep and cuddly image, and that we'll all forget this colossal sellout in a few months.

There's no shortage of speculation as to why Trudeau bought the pipeline: maybe he's planning on waiting until after the 2019 federal election before ramming the pipeline through – or just until the present moment of mobilization exits the news cycle. Maybe \$4.5 billion seems like pocket change compared to the value of satisfying Chinese investors in the tar sands – it's estimated that after 2020, Canada will ship 500,000 barrels per day of crude to Asia, primarily China. Maybe resource extraction is so deeply embedded in the Canadian mythos that Trudeau simply can't imagine a sustainable energy future for this country.

But in another sense, "honestly, not that much has changed," says Ben West, a long-time campaigner against pipelines in British Columbia, "other than the federal government is now wasting billions of taxpayers' dollars." We've been saying from the beginning that this pipeline will not be built, and there's no reason

to treat this development as anything other than an escalation of the neoliberal status quo. Most of us have never trusted Justin with the good hair.

Already, climate justice activists across the country have taken brave and creative actions of dissent. Council of Canadians organizer Robin Tress marched through Trudeau's address at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities convention in Halifax, (literally) blowing a whistle to protest the deal. Activists with Climate Justice Edmonton disrupted Bill Morneau's speech at a \$200-a-plate luncheon with Calgary business leaders. Indigenous and environmental groups are battling the National Energy Board, while Greenpeace activists scaled a Kinder Morgan drill in Delta, B.C. Supporters in B.C. have held court rallies for comrades who have been arrested; high-schoolers in Vancouver walked out of class; First Nations erected a traditional Coast Salish Watch House (Kwekwecnewtxw) in the path of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. June 4, a national day of action, saw rallies and protests across the country.

Perhaps Trudeau thinks that by making the Trans Mountain pipeline a public problem, Canadians will be forced to swallow our principles and support a project we'll soon be shareholders in. Instead, he's invested us all in making sure the Trans Mountain expansion never happens. Let's show him that he's picking a fight that he won't win. ★

SAIMA DESAI, EDITOR

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Note: The Briarpatch Annual General Meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, September 17 – and you're invited! Come meet the crew and help us steer the ship. We're at 2138 McIntyre Street, Treaty 4 territory, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Online-only articles:

The students of Nicaragua's April uprising

BY LORI HANSON AND MIGUEL GOMEZ ON JUNE 8, 2018

Autoconvocados – self-organized student protesters – are mobilizing against the repressive Ortega government. But their movement threatens to fall into the hands of nationalists and pro-capitalists.

Dear Erin Weir, what are you doing?

BY DAVID GRAY-DONALD ON MAY 15, 2018

Doubling down in the face of harassment allegations isn't helping anyone

Who will commemorate the Nakba in Canada?

BY MORGAN DUCHESNEY ON MAY 14, 2018

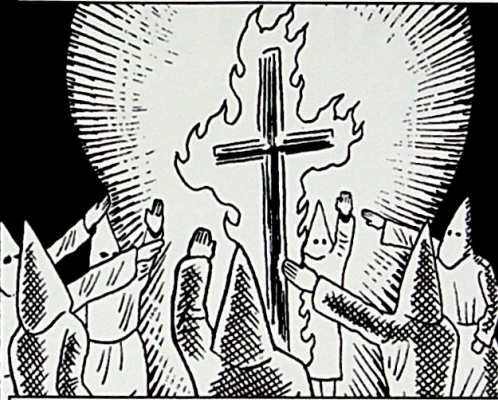
Why is the Canadian government so dead-set on ignoring Israel's past and present human rights abuses?

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THE K.K.K. IN 1920S SASKATCHEWAN

BY GORD HILL

IN THE 1920'S, THE **KU KLUX KLAN** (K.K.K.) EXPANDED FROM THE U.S. INTO CANADA, WHERE IT SOON HAD CHAPTERS **ACROSS** THE COUNTRY.



WHILE B.C. & ALBERTA EACH HAD SEVERAL **THOUSAND** MEMBERS, **SASKATCHEWAN** HAD THE MOST, WITH SOME **25,000**. THE KLAN INCLUDED MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, MAYORS, POLICE, ETC.

LIKE THE K.K.K. IN THE U.S., THE KLAN IN CANADA WAS **WHITE SUPREMACIST, ANTI-SEMITIC, ANTI-IMMIGRANT, ETC.**



IN CANADA, THE KLAN WAS ALSO **PRO-BRITISH & ANTI-FRANCOPHONE.**

IN SASKATCHEWAN, THE KLAN WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE **CONSERVATIVE PARTY** & HELPED THE PARTY **WIN** THE 1929 PROVINCIAL ELECTION.



BY THE EARLY 1930S, THE CANADIAN KLAN WAS RAPIDLY DECLINING. IT FACED GROWING **OPPOSITION** & WAS ALSO SEEN AS A MONEY-MAKING **SCHEME** AFTER SEVERAL CASES OF **CORRUPTION** BECAME KNOWN.

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—Jenna M. Loyd

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—Setha Low

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—Shiri Pasternak

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POLITICS | CULTURE | ACTIVISM

Black and Indigenous activists' reflections on land, policing, and gender

DISTINCT HISTORIES, SHARED SOLIDARITY

BY NICKITA LONGMAN AND PHILLIP DWIGHT MORGAN

The recent, high-profile acquittals of two white men, Gerald Stanley and Raymond Cormier, for the deaths of two Indigenous youth, Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine, have caused a spike in public awareness of the failure of the Canadian justice system to protect Indigenous lives. In an effort to help Americans understand the importance of the acquittals, many have referred to Colten Boushie as the "Rodney King of Western Canada," and described his death as "Canada's Trayvon Martin moment." These comparisons between the conditions of Black folks in the U.S. and Indigenous peoples in Canada are not new. In Nancy Macdonald's 2016 *Maclean's* article "Canada's prisons are the 'new residential schools,'" an unnamed doctor quips "there is a good reason they call Saskatchewan 'Alabama North.'" Activists, academics, and journalists have

increasingly adopted such comparisons in an attempt to induce a sympathetic reaction from the white Canadian settler state and allies alike.

Though usually well intentioned, equating Indigenous struggles with Black struggles is an inaccurate parallel – one that glosses over important differences in the ways that the Canadian and U.S. settler states operate, and erases the differences in the injustices that each group experiences.

Tina Fontaine spent months in the foster care system, followed by a run-in with police, and a documented visit to the hospital days before her body was pulled from the Red River. Black and Indigenous people clearly cannot look to the state and its sympathizers for protection or systemic change. Instead, our movements must be rooted in recognizing the differences between our experiences of oppression,

and continuing to learn from and stand beside each other while building new, shared spaces to exist.

We are interested in opening a conversation about the complex and distinct histories of Black and Indigenous peoples in relation to land, policing, and gender. The two of us first met in 2017 when Phillip interviewed Nickita for a rabble.ca series on grassroots activism across the country. Nickita Longman is Saulteaux and a member of George Gordon First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory. Having spent the majority of her life in Regina, Saskatchewan, Nickita has mobilized herself on Indigenous issues on the Prairies. Phillip Dwight Morgan is a Toronto-based journalist and poet. He is a member of Education Not Incarceration, a team of youth, students, parents, educators, researchers, and community organizers in Toronto who have come together to address the school-to-prison pipeline.

RELATIONSHIP TO LAND

"I chuckle deeply to myself because they did not realize that body and homeland cannot be separated, that they are not distinct entities, that no matter where our bodies are we can feel our homelands in the night, can hear our ancestors murmuring and humming under our skin, can feel the lakes and rivers that we come from slowly trickle over rock."

—Quill Christie-Peters,
"Kwe becomes the moon, touches herself so she can feel full again," *GUTS Magazine*

NICKITA: There are few connections in the world as fierce as that of Indigeneity and relationship to land. As a Saulteaux woman growing up in an urban setting, I have physical distance from my reserve – but in another way, there is also a lot of closeness. Other Indigenous folks are immediately able to locate me when I tell them where I am from, and vice versa. This is a revolutionary sense of solidarity among Indigenous peoples that the government failed to extinguish while using divide-and-conquer tactics, implementing the pass system, and attempting mass genocide of our people. I get to carry the relationship to my reserve around with me in urban settings, but it all goes back to where we are from and how we are in relation to our ancestral lands.



I understand this as a major privilege. There are too many Indigenous folks who were forcibly removed from their homelands during the residential school era and the '60s Scoop, or who suffered the loss of status due to the limitations within the Indian Act – each of which present overwhelming obstacles in regaining an understanding of what homelands they belong to.

PHILLIP: The relationship between body and land that you describe is unfamiliar to me, as it's tied to a different history, place, and context. I was born in Scarborough, Ontario, to Jamaican immigrants and gave little thought to land growing up. Despite all of the fanfare around diversity at my high school, I did not have any Indigenous friends growing up and my lessons in school were about white men who "founded" and "built" Canada.

Even as my friends and I began challenging the whole nation-building narrative, this skepticism didn't affect our own relationships to the land. Even now, I know many Black folks who oppose police brutality, and housing and education discrimination, yet cling to the idea of owning a house as a strategy for achieving socio-economic stability. This vision of progress is, at its core, a more inclusive version of our existing hierarchy, essentially folding Black people into systems of domination and displacement rather than supporting Indigenous governance.

I recently attended a teach-in at the University of Toronto where five Indigenous women spoke about Indigenous law and practice. Tracey Lindberg, a Cree author and academic, spoke about the importance of learning the protocols of *any* new territory she was entering; she said that this was to honour and acknowledge the people of that land. She also told everyone in the audience that they were, as of that moment, divested of their ignorance – they could no longer say that they were unaware of the importance of recognizing Indigenous law. I took this to heart. As many Indigenous activists call for settlers to repatriate land, I wonder: what does it mean for Black people to be materially and intellectually invested in the notion of property ownership, even if only as an abstract aspiration?

POLICING

"Though there is a relationship, the racial logic of slavery and settler colonialism take different forms and are not reducible to one another; anti-Blackness and settler colonialism rest on somewhat different foundations."

—Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives*



we never again
need to remind you
that WE built this

we never again
need to remind you
that WE built this

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

May we never again
have to remind you
that WE built THIS

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

PHILLIP: Black and Indigenous activists share a vested interest in fighting policing and, more broadly, state violence. Our communities are largely separate from each other and yet, all across the country, in rural and in urban communities, Black and Indigenous peoples are heavily surveilled, brutalized, and criminalized by police and authorities. Our communities are overrepresented in the child welfare system, in prisons, and in incidents when lethal force is used by police.

According to data from 2013, in Ontario, Black children or children with one Black parent constitute 42 per cent of the children in the care of the Children's Aid Society. This is despite the fact that only eight per cent of the population under 18 years of age in Toronto is Black. In this same system, Indigenous children are much more likely to be investigated as possible victims of child abuse or neglect than white children – 130 per cent more likely, in fact.

Likewise, Indigenous adults make up five per cent of the Canadian population but 27 per cent of the in-custody federal offender population. For Black Canadians, these numbers are three per cent and nine per cent, respectively.

Despite these similarities it is worth noting – as Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, Pamela Palmater, and others have – that the logic of policing as it relates to Indigenous bodies is to erase their presence from the land, while with Black bodies it is a logic of diminishing our humanity or threatening what Robyn Maynard has called “Black personhood.”

In September 2016, I posted a video on Facebook in which I shared a few details of my life, things like enjoying rock climbing and carrot muffins, before discussing my fear of being killed by the police. I made the video after seeing footage of the shooting deaths of Keith Lamont Scott and Terence Crutcher in the United States; it was essentially an obituary on film. As people commented on the video, I realized that few people understood the personal experiences and context that I was bringing to the conversation around police shootings. Some people even commented that I was hyperbolizing my fear.

I see something similar happening in the wake of Colten Boushie's and Tina Fontaine's murders. As Indigenous people speak about these cases, I hear a depth of pain tied to a context and history that only Indigenous people can understand. I've heard Indigenous people recount collapsing to the ground when the verdicts were announced; their bodies simply revolted.

As I grapple with this question of Black-Indigenous solidarity, I am interested in exploring how we can gesture toward shared experiences of colonial violence without flattening our histories of enslavement, dehumanization, genocide, and erasure.

NICKITA: Policing looks uniquely different in rural communities on the Prairies. As agents of the illegitimate settler state, the RCMP have always had a tense relationship with Indigenous folks – particularly in rural settings. We witnessed this in real

time with the brutal treatment of Debbie Baptiste, Colten Boushie's mother, the day Colten was murdered on a rural farm not far from Red Pheasant First Nation. The RCMP's callous treatment of Baptiste – and their negligent, half-baked investigation in its entirety – furthered the wedge between settlers and Indigenous folks, who are already expected to co-exist on stolen lands after many decades of attempted cultural genocide. It is implied that Indigenous people should succumb to the colonial construct of state and reserve lines (despite the eradication of the pass system), and accept that it is not always safe for us to move beyond those borders.

Because of the open antagonism of white settlers, many Indigenous people I know no longer feel safe on rural roads. What is most unsettling is we have been intimidated out of the freedom of accessing these gravel roads between urban centres and towns to get to and from our own reserves without fear and intimidation. Where are we to feel safe? Who is protecting us?

In many ways, the police forces and the RCMP work to uphold the illusion of “peace” between white settlers and everyone else. It begs for friction, tension, and violence when the land they operate on was forcibly taken from Indigenous peoples to begin with. A recent CBC investigation revealed that of all the law enforcement agencies in Canada, the RCMP were responsible for the greatest number of deaths involving police, at 118 victims over the past 17 years.

Further, Indigenous women make up less than three per cent of the population, but comprise 38 per cent of the women in federal prison. That number has risen by 109 per cent since 2001. Things are not improving. Brown and Black cis, heterosexual men are placed at the forefront when it comes to discussions of police brutality. We need to begin naming police violence against our women and gender nonconforming Black and Indigenous bodies – and that can begin with dismantling patriarchy in our own circles.

GENDER

“We should not have to work so hard to overcome barriers imposed by people who were supposed to share these lands with us, as guests and eventually as kin. Nonetheless, to exist as an Indigenous woman or two-spirited person is an inherently political act. Simply resisting our erasure is part of our work.”

—Chelsea Vowel,

“Indigenous women and two-spirited people: Our work is decolonization!” *GUTS Magazine*

PHILLIP: When it comes to stories about anti-Black racism in the news, my experience is that cisgender, heterosexual Black men such as myself are overrepresented in the discussion. This obscures the impact of anti-Black racism experienced by all

other members of our Black communities.

Firstly, Black men – myself included – must learn to step back sometimes, showing the humility and integrity to admit when we are not in the best position to speak about certain issues. Secondly, we must begin strategically using the visibility and access we have to challenge the compounded oppressions that Black women and non-binary folks face.

I've witnessed Black men interrupting Black women to tell them that they should not be talking about carding because they're not the ones getting harassed on the streets. This is patently false and certainly counterproductive.

Ultimately, our experiences of trauma and oppression do not amount to a disinvestment from patriarchy. This is something that I am recognizing in my own life and working on; it is difficult and necessary work within our communities.

The problem that I'm describing within Black communities also exists between Black and Indigenous communities, with each often remaining silent about the other's oppressions. Instances of violence within and between our communities often go unchecked, as there is a really difficult calculation involved in holding people accountable while also acknowledging their trauma and violence. We need to begin addressing the misogyny, anti-Blackness, and anti-Indigeneity within and between our communities. This does not happen alongside dismantling settler colonialism but is, instead, part of the process.

NICKITA: As a cisgender Indigenous woman with an opinion on and experience with oppression, I often find myself labelled as 'intimidating' or 'unapproachable' by white folks. I exist at the intersection of expectations of femininity – that I should be a warm welcome mat – and Indigeneity – that I should be assimilated and well adjusted to living under colonialism. It is a debilitating double standard foisted on brilliant Indigenous and Black women when sharing their opinions and experiences.

Patriarchy and misogyny know no bounds. They have crept their way into Indigenous lived experience, and more often than not, uphold our men in positions that leave our women, our two-spirit and LGBTQ (2SLGBTQ) folks underfoot. It is no surprise that our views and expressions are seen as second, third, or fourth rate in our own circles, especially when misogyny is compounded with the colonial nature of institutions like academia, law, and politics.

What complicates things further is when women of colour call out or call in men of colour for their problematic behaviour. Ideally, accountability happens within our own cultures, although there are plenty of instances when it is necessary to fall outside of these lines. But when women of colour call out men in their communities, it's often dismissed as "lateral violence" – violence that's wrongly directed toward peers, rather than oppressors. And while lateral violence does exist, these accusations can also be weaponized to silence women and 2SLGBTQ folks seeking accountability in spaces where patriarchy and misogyny run rampant. We need to

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acknowledge that men of colour can be our peers and our oppressors at the same time, and that holding them accountable is not violence, but rather an act toward justice and care.

Recently, I helped write and publish an open letter alongside Indigenous women and two-spirit people who carry knowledge of physical abuse from an Indigenous man. Some of the harshest criticisms of the letter came from other Indigenous women. Sometimes we become so thoroughly conditioned by patriarchy that we come to its defence despite it being one of the most destructive weapons introduced by colonizers. It can only be dismantled by peeling back the layers of our own histories and addressing the ways our communities have been infiltrated by patriarchy.

These same tactics of peeling back our own histories also need to be applied to anti-Blackness in Indigenous communities. This can leave many people feeling vulnerable in the process, because

these colonial histories have held us in place for so long. However, serious change and a commitment to solidarity to one another has rarely come out of staying comfortable. ★



NICKITA LONGMAN is from the George Gordon First Nation on Treaty 4 but has spent most of her life in Regina. Nickita graduated from the First Nations University of Canada with a BA in English in 2013. She is the Indigenous program coordinator for the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, a freelance writer, and a *Briarpatch* board member.



PHILLIP DWIGHT MORGAN is a Toronto-based writer and activist of Jamaican heritage. His essays, op-eds, and interviews have appeared in *Maclean's*, *CBC News*, *rabble.ca*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Ethnic Aisle*.

Thank you.

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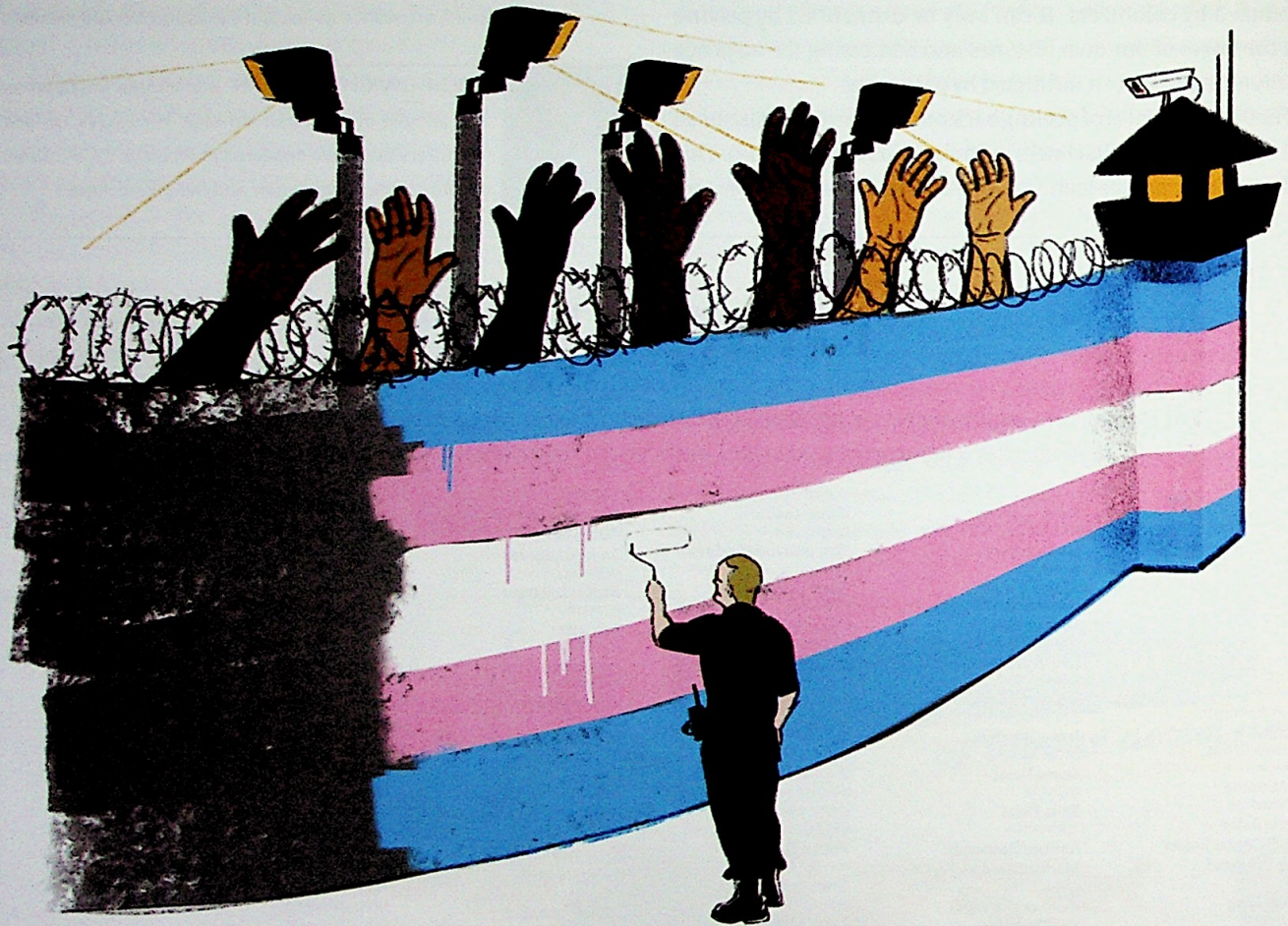
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Julia Mitchell
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SASKATOON, SK

THE DANGEROUS ILLUSION *of the*



HUMANE PRISON

The right of trans prisoners in Canada to self-identify their gender is an important win. How can it be used to fuel – and not drain – our efforts towards a future without prisons?

BY DANIEL KARASIK
ILLUSTRATION BY B HAYWARD

Consider the strip search.

As of late 2017, a federal prisoner in Canada is to be housed and otherwise treated in accordance with their declared gender identity, which means guards of that same gender will carry out such a search. The prisoner may not, however, refuse the search. If they refuse, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) outlines a six-step procedure for how "the strip search of a non-compliant inmate" is to be forced. In step (a), the commanding officer is to issue and repeat a command:

has been proven that prisons do not actually make communities safer. At the same time, it recognizes the urgent need to ease the suffering of people now behind bars, especially those who are hyper-vulnerable to brutalization, like queer and trans prisoners. From an abolitionist perspective, then, we should celebrate Canada's recent reform of its policy on transgender prisoners – but also insist that these reforms do not legitimize or make humane a system whose basic business remains torture, sexual abuse, and social murder.

to be "overriding health and safety concerns." They are to have access to either or both men's and women's catalogues of personal items for order. They are to be strip-searched as described.

In itself, the right of gender self-identification for transgender prisoners is a major win. It takes seriously the stated experiences of trans people; it moves a certain amount of power to shape trans lives out of the hands of the medical establishment. If scrupulously enforced – a big if – it could do a great deal to protect incarcerated trans women

"When Correctional Service Canada was forced to make these policy changes, they were also forced to give incarcerated people some agency in making decisions about their own [lives] and well-being."

"A strip search must be conducted. If you do not cooperate, physical handling, or chemical or inflammatory agents may be used. Will you cooperate and remove your clothes yourself? Do you understand?" Indoors, an inflammatory rather than a chemical agent is likely to be used. The current inflammatory agent of choice is oleoresin capsicum: pepper spray. Step (f) clarifies that the search must be videotaped and that "it may be necessary to videotape a naked or partially naked" inmate who remains "non-compliant." But all this state-sanctioned violence will be conducted with the sensitivity detailed in step (e): "staff will ensure that inmates diagnosed with gender dysphoria are accommodated with due regard for the vulnerabilities with respect to their needs, including safety and privacy."

Implemented December 2017, the reform in question reverses CSC's original policy of assigning transgender prisoners to male or female institutions based on their anatomical sex. It follows from federal Bill C-16, which added "gender identity and expression" to the types of discrimination forbidden by the Canadian Human Rights Act. That bill was the result of a 12-year battle by trans activists across the country: while former NDP member of Parliament Bill Siksay brought versions of the legislation to Parliament annually from 2005, grassroots mobilizations made sure that trans interests were not marginalized by middle-class LGBTQ advocacy that centred on marriage equality.

As a result, federal prisoners now have the right to self-identify their gender.

in particular, who are at extraordinarily high risk of experiencing gender-based violence in men's prisons. The statistics bureau for the U.S. Department of Justice found that between 2011 and 2012, 33.2 per cent of trans people who were incarcerated in federal and state prisons had been sexually assaulted by another incarcerated person, to say nothing of assaults by guards and staff. A California study found that of transgender women held in men's prisons, 59 per cent had been sexually assaulted by another incarcerated person. Similar data on Canadian prisons is scarce but points in the same direction.

The new CSC policy "puts a bit of power back into the hands of people who are incarcerated," says Rene Callahan-St. John, a trans man and advocate for trans rights who works with the Montreal-based Prisoner Correspondence Project. "When CSC was forced to make these policy changes, they were also forced to give incarcerated people some agency in making decisions about their own [lives] and well-being."

To restore agency to the incarcerated is both an urgent task for activism and a paradox emblematic of neoliberalism. A typical move of neoliberalism, the political ideology informing both the Harper and Trudeau governments, is to bestow narrow (but highly publicized) forms of agency on individuals it has locked into

The prison abolition movement argues that the modern prison is itself violence.

The prison abolition movement argues that the modern prison is itself violence. It insists that no human person should be kept in a cage; that no amount of reform can make prisons acceptable; and that a respectful, enlightened prison is a contradiction in terms. It aims to end the use of incarceration as the main social strategy for managing criminalized behaviours, since it

(Prisoners serving sentences shorter than two years fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces; some, including Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan, have made an equivalent policy change.) Whatever their anatomy, those prisoners are to be confined in institutions that correspond to their gender, except where there are judged

coercive (but largely hidden) structures. This is how a progressive transgender prisoner policy can co-exist with Liberal-rubber-stamped federal funding for prison expansion, a total failure to roll back Harper-era mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines as promised, no visible investment in restorative justice alternatives to imprisonment as proposed, and provisions in the Criminal Code that have a disproportionate, discriminatory

carceral and military violence. In Canada the average prison sentence for a person convicted for charges related to HIV non-disclosure is 54 months, and lifetime designation as a sex offender.

"Yes, we have to have gender-responsive strategies in place," Nair continues, "but I'm always really concerned and wary about what I call the 'switch and bait' strategy of neoliberalism, which is: 'We'll give you this [reform], oh, by the way, whoops,

increase the risk of criminalization, he says. "Trans people end up depending on survival crimes like selling drugs, street-based sex work, or petty theft to get by."

Government policy that aims to support trans safety must end the brutalization of trans people already trapped in prisons, but it must also invest in trans lives before they become criminalized. "Trans people need access to health care, housing, jobs, and social assistance," says Callahan-St. John.

"If what rights and recognition mean is being locked up in a murder box with the right name on the outside, then rights and recognition mean nothing."

impact on queer and trans communities, like those around HIV non-disclosure.

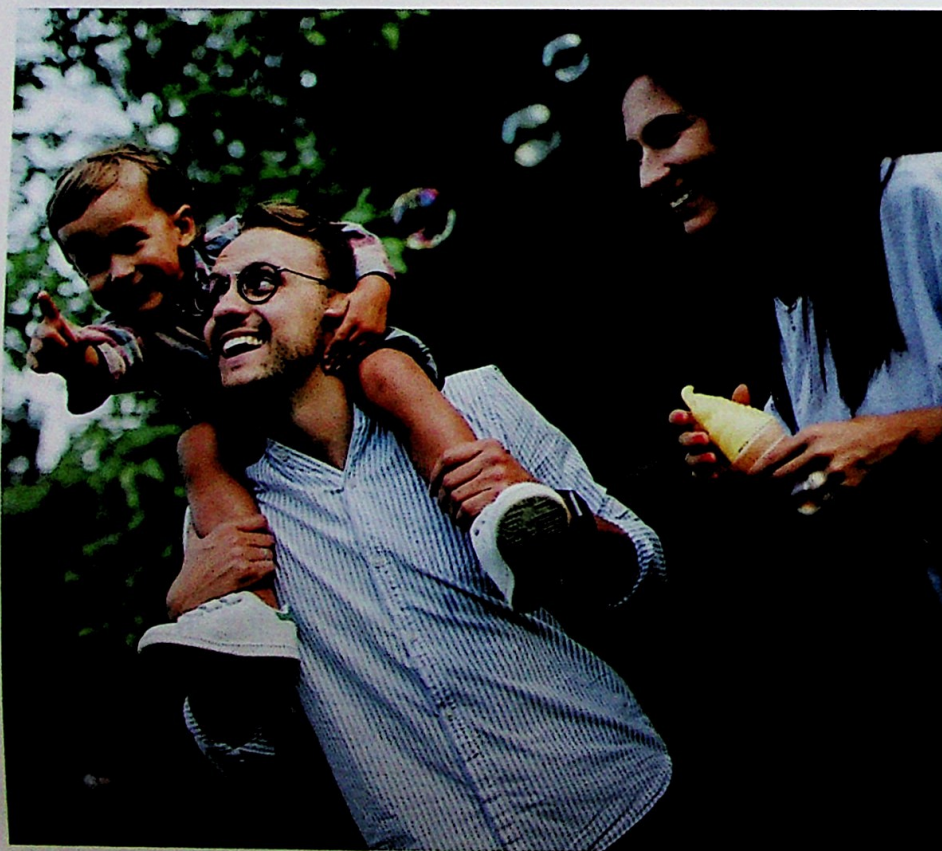
"What surprises me about Canada, despite its relatively low – in comparison [to the U.S.] – incarceration rate, is the ferocity with which it has criminalized HIV," says Chicago-based writer and activist Yasmin Nair, co-founder of the radical queer editorial collective Against Equality, which agitates against the state co-opting LGBTQ issues to underwrite its

built a few more prisons over there.' [...] So while the policies around HIV-positive people are rapidly escalating, we're getting gender-responsive prisons."

Callahan-St. John, too, points to the need for a broad systemic analysis that can account for why people on the trans spectrum are so likely to end up in prisons in the first place. Transphobia within families, job discrimination, and inadequate access to trans health care all

"The government must prioritize funding community organizations that build strong trans communities so that we are no longer pushed to the margins of society where we are entrapped by the legal justice system."

The new CSC policy also relies on the man/woman gender binary that has, at best, ambiguous implications for non-binary or gender non-conforming prisoners. Here much depends on enforcement of the policy, which is left to the discretion of prison



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administrators. A genderfluid, bigender, or non-binary transfeminine-spectrum person may prefer not to be housed in a men's prison, where violence may be most intense and where they will almost certainly be a target. A trans man, who may also be at risk of violence in a men's facility if his trans identity becomes known, might have the same desire. So might cis men who, because of their small size or other traits coded feminine, are non-consensually gen-

the CSC's new policy rolls out. This means listening to incarcerated trans people – particularly Indigenous and Black trans women. Does what the government says match what the government does, in the experience of the incarcerated? What do our imprisoned comrades recount in their letters? What monitoring and reporting standards for the treatment of trans inmates does the federal government put in place? How accommodating are prison

What do our imprisoned comrades recount in their letters?

dered female by guards or peers and thus subjected to gender-based violence. That latter wish is almost certain to be refused by the prison administration, since the feminized man in question articulates gender in a way that fails to make him a recognized subject of trans rights. And the others? How does the recognition offered by CSC's new transgender policy contribute to the broader project of ending violence against prisoners who are feminized, whether by choice or by force?

"If what rights and recognition mean is being locked up in a murder box with the right name on the outside, then rights and recognition mean nothing," says Harry Josephine Giles, a writer and performer from Scotland who works on prison abolition. To be sure, Giles says, "our primary concern should be the material welfare of trans people – and most especially of trans women of colour – in prison [...] but the questions for activists should be focused on treatment of us rather than [on] symbolic recognition of us by the state." Campaigns for better gender recognition in prisons are crucial, Giles argues, as a survival need, but they must be coordinated with campaigns to end incarceration as the main strategy for redressing criminalized harm. "Or our siblings will continue to suffer the social murder of the penal system."

Along those lines, Canadians committed to a future without prisons should monitor the treatment of trans prisoners as

officials of cases that challenge binary ideas of gender? Under what circumstances, and how often, do those officials exercise their licence to deny trans prisoners' wishes on "overriding health and safety" grounds? How do these issues play out differently on the federal and provincial levels, and how can we ensure that every province and territory houses trans inmates in gender-appropriate facilities?

Gender self-determination is a fundamental human freedom, and we should celebrate any and all steps toward it. We should remember, too, that our own freedoms under neoliberal capitalism are typically granted to us only if we agree to avert our eyes from the brutality the state inflicts in "our" name against "them" – where "we" are presumed to be middle class, white, cis, straight, and able-bodied, and "they" are poor, racialized, LGBTQ, and/or disabled. This we must resist. Faced with a system that pacifies resistance through co-optation, that offers important reforms in part to defuse hopes for broader transformation, we must practice saying yes and no at the same time. ★



DANIEL KARASIK (they/he) is a writer and performer in Toronto. They have led writing workshops with prisoners at Chicago's Cook County Jail, volunteer with a restorative justice-oriented rehabilitation program for the formerly incarcerated, and organize with the Toronto New Socialists.

PROCESS OF DEPRESSION

BY NICHOLAS DINARDO

Some of us don't want to talk about depression for systemic oppression. For, if we do, we're stripped of intention, thrown in a dress, then left with the tension. Not to mention, the other dimension of the lens: when two of their henchmen come and search the hems of the dress then tell me to undress so they can examine what's left. What's left is a soul in distress, a man depressed, a body in stress, and the spirit oppressed.

In September 2016, Nicholas Dinardo was arrested and sent to remand at the Regina Correctional Centre. He was moved into segregation after hitting another prisoner with a broom. For most of the last year he has remained in segregation, spending 23 hours a day in his cell, alone. Nick has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, and has attempted suicide many times since being imprisoned. Nick said that these words flowed out of him on day five of his most recent spiritual fast.



Artisans offer their work for sale or trade in front of one of the main buildings of the Caracol, while others watch the soccer match from the balcony.

“WE DON’T NEED PERMISSION TO BE FREE”

On January 1, 1994, the Zapatistas’ armed uprising seized several cities and towns in southern Mexico, on the same day that the NAFTA agreement took force. Now, as Trump threatens to rip up NAFTA and others seek to “modernize” it, it’s once again Indigenous peoples who will bear the fallout of neoliberal policies.

In March of 2018, thousands of self-identified women Zapatistas and activists gathered in Chiapas to share their struggles and victories in building a world beyond capitalism.

WORDS & PHOTOS BY ERIN INNES

The Spanish sign on the side of the hill doesn't mince any words: "You are in Zapatista autonomous territory. Here the people lead, and the government obeys."

That sign welcomes us into the Caracol of Morelia in Chiapas, Mexico, for the First International Gathering of Women in Struggle, held over five days in March 2018. I am one of over 5,000 (self-identified) women activists from around the world, hosted by over 2,000 Zapatista women from across their territory, who have travelled here to share our struggles. Some of the women I'm travelling with are Indigenous land defenders and culture keepers from North America; others are the children and grandchildren of Latin American migrants who were displaced from their homes by the very forces the Zapatistas have been fighting against for three decades; still others are activists like me, descendants of European invaders on Turtle Island looking for some way out of the destructive culture that our predecessors built. Could what the Zapatistas have created show us a way to do that? I'm here to see for myself.

A POETICS OF REVOLUTION

The Zapatistas burst onto the international scene on January 1, 1994, the day that the NAFTA agreement took force, when their armed uprising seized several towns and cities in the southernmost state of Mexico. But for more than a decade before, the Zapatistas had been slowly building a clandestine movement to reassert the dignity and autonomy of their communities.

Today they control about a third of the territory of Chiapas, with an unknown population that likely totals somewhere around 300,000. There are also communities and supporters in the surrounding states, many of them living and organizing at various levels of the same *clandestino* movement that began here, in its highland heartland. The Zapatistas don't generally give out their names, and they wear their masks at all times to protect their anonymity. "Our words are collective," says one *compañera*, "so our identities don't matter."

Being opposed as they are to universals, the Zapatistas' foundational beliefs are hard to pin down in a way that can be maddening to outsiders. Theirs has always been a movement of poetics and myth as much as military tactics. At the *Encuentro*, the gathering, I heard a story of the enigmatic spokesperson formerly known as Subcomandante Marcos that shows some of that poetics. Like so

many Zapatista stories, it may or may not be true; its mythos is its power. During the clandestine times, when the insurgents were always being hunted, Marcos and several other insurgents were riding their horses through the jungle. Coming down the road was a group of women, walking with the sun behind them. Unable to see their faces, the insurgents wondered if they were friends or foes – but Marcos looked ahead and said, "Those women are *hermanas*, sisters. They are with us." Surprised, the other insurgents asked him how he could tell just from their silhouettes in the dawn light. "By the way they walk," he says. The dignity in their stride – among a people so oppressed by colonialism and patriarchy that

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one *compañera* told us that, before the uprising, Indigenous women would be given away for a case of beer – was their mark of being Zapatistas. After spending just a few days among these women, I know what he means. I could feel their collective strength just being in their territory, sharing in this small part of the world they've built for themselves. The power of that dignity shaped everything that happened at this gathering, and it's the thing that I'll carry with me more than anything else I experienced there.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF POLITICS

It's a significant time for the Zapatistas to hold such a gathering. María de Jesús Patricio Martínez – affectionately known as Marichuy – was elected as the spokesperson for the National Indigenous Congress (CNI), and is the first Indigenous woman to attempt a run for president. Her candidacy was mistakenly interpreted by many as a shift in the Zapatistas' tactics, toward more institutional forms of power. Many people in Mexico, as well as abroad, reported that Marichuy's candidacy was the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) running a candidate in the elections, a falsehood that was roundly put down in a communiqué released in November 2016. "For the politicians above, across the political spectrum," reads the communiqué, "there will always be a foreign enemy behind indigenous peoples [...] the EZLN has not 'altered its course' to any degree, nor has



Daily soccer matches took place during the Encuentro, with formal teams from different Caracols competing, as well as open games for anyone to join.

it reoriented its struggle to the institutional electoral path."

That misunderstanding demonstrates how little the broader public in Mexico understands the Zapatistas and their relationship with the CNI. Liz, a student from Mexico City, came to the gathering to learn for herself about the Zapatistas. "People in the rest of Mexico don't understand what's happening here," she tells me. "They don't know what the people here have built. They only

These three priorities – water, Indigenous rights, and limiting corporate power to set policy and control resources – mirror the broad shape of struggles that were represented at the gathering.

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The Zapatistas' struggle against what they call the *gobierno malo*, the bad government – the entire system of non-Indigenous governments whose task is to administer capitalism – is not just a struggle of ideology and opinion. The EZLN is still an army, and for good reason. Just a handful of weeks before the gathering, fighting erupted again in the small town of Oxchuc, on the edge of Zapatista-controlled territory, which has been

the site of an almost year-long struggle between the Indigenous population and the paramilitary supporters of the governing mayor and council. As we drove through Oxchuc on the way to the gathering, our van had to navigate around the remnants of roadblocks that had been erected during the conflict.

On the international political stage, too, there are events in motion with deep implications for the Zapatistas' struggle. Amid the current negotiations to "modernize" NAFTA, as well as Trump's storms of tweet-threats to rip it up, the agreement's future seems uncertain.

Many civil society groups in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico are demanding three major reforms to NAFTA: remove all references to water as a tradable commodity; end the investor-state dispute resolution mechanism, which allows the private sector to sue state entities for lost profits due to regulations; and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples. Trudeau's Liberal government has reportedly introduced an Indigenous rights chapter to the negotiations, and while they solicited input from Indigenous organizations, few outside of government and the negotiating team have seen the draft.

These three priorities – water, Indigenous rights, and limiting corporate power to set policy and control resources – mirror the broad shape of struggles that were represented at the gathering. During the course of the event, hundreds of workshops and report-backs were offered by visiting women from all over Latin America and the world. Many of the struggles they came to talk about were the sort of mythological, David-and-Goliath clashes that echo

across Turtle Island: Indigenous and peasant communities resisting dams, highways, and land grabs (usually facilitated by industrial agriculture); fighting to stop mines whose parent companies have office towers in downtown Vancouver and names on buildings at Canadian universities. Again and again in these struggles, just like

meet the criteria or can't gather the proof necessary to qualify. Additionally, women migrants often face gendered violence at the hands of police and immigration officers, and are unable to access domestic violence services if they are living without status in their new country of residence. It is simply not known how

Women lose their wealth and their place in the community when their traditional provisioning work is lost, and sexism in the workforce means that they are often excluded from the wage economy that replaces it.

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STRUGGLE BEGINS WITH LAND

In many Latin American countries, most of the women live by working the land, in the peasant agricultures that feed their communities. "Peasant agriculture improves the land," says Tamara Ortiz-Ávila, a Mexican agro-ecologist and peasants' rights advocate. "The water, the soil, all of the land is restored by working it in the traditional way." During her presentation on peasants and agro-ecology, she talked about peasant communities that have cultivated their lands for generations without depleting the soil or water. But when industrial agriculture moves in, the land is exhausted within a few years, making traditional lifeways impossible.

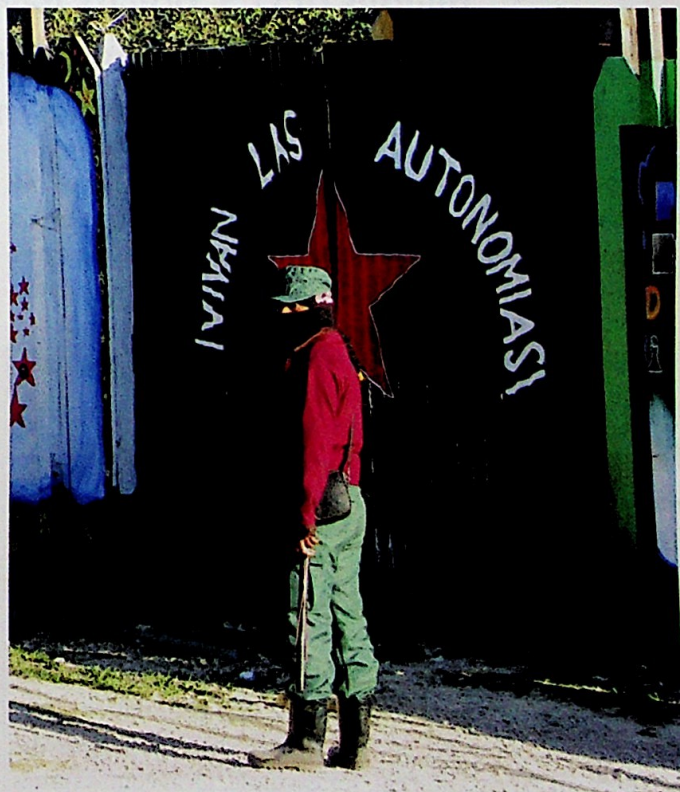
Under agreements such as NAFTA, peasants have lost access to their lands in favour of export-focused agribusinesses. Ortiz-Ávila gave the example of women she's worked with in Michoacán, where over 100,000 hectares of avocados are produced for export. The diverse agriculture of the peasants has been displaced by international agribusiness operations. "So now," says Ortiz-Ávila, "the women there can't access any land to grow their own food."

The loss of this agriculture, and the displacement of Indigenous peoples more generally, puts women particularly at risk. Women lose their wealth and their place in the community when their traditional provisioning work is lost, and sexism in the workforce means that they are often excluded from the wage economy that replaces it. Not able to access waged employment or to support their families in the traditional way, many of these women are forced to migrate off their lands into urban areas, or – more dangerously – across country borders.

Speaking on the same panel as Ortiz-Ávila, Anita Clerida, a migrant rights activist working in Chiapas, asks the 40 or 50 people in the room to put up our hands if we know someone who is a migrant. Every hand in the room goes up, a chilling reminder of the scope of the migration crisis throughout Latin America. It's much more difficult for women migrants to find work than it is for men, making their lives especially precarious. Women often migrate to escape domestic violence, hoping for refugee status in the U.S. and Canada, find that they don't

many people disappear trying to migrate through Mexico, but many thousands of them are displaced Indigenous women. To me, the disappearances hauntingly echo the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women here in Canada.

Many of these dynamics of displacement and migration have their roots in agreements like NAFTA, which enshrine neoliberalism in Latin American economic policy. I asked Clerida how these connections work. "These [trade agreement] negotiations only concern commercial interests," says Clerida. "For example, there are many provisions in NAFTA for developing Mexico's agriculture – but it is all industrial agriculture. There is nothing there about the agriculture of the *campesinos*, no protection for peasant agriculture." Without that protection, so-called "development" only intensifies the displacement of Indigenous



A Zapatista woman takes her turn at guard duty near the front gate during the Encuentro. While the soldiers inside the Encuentro were only armed with clubs, fully armed patrols are present throughout the Zapatista territory due to the threat of violence from the Mexican state.



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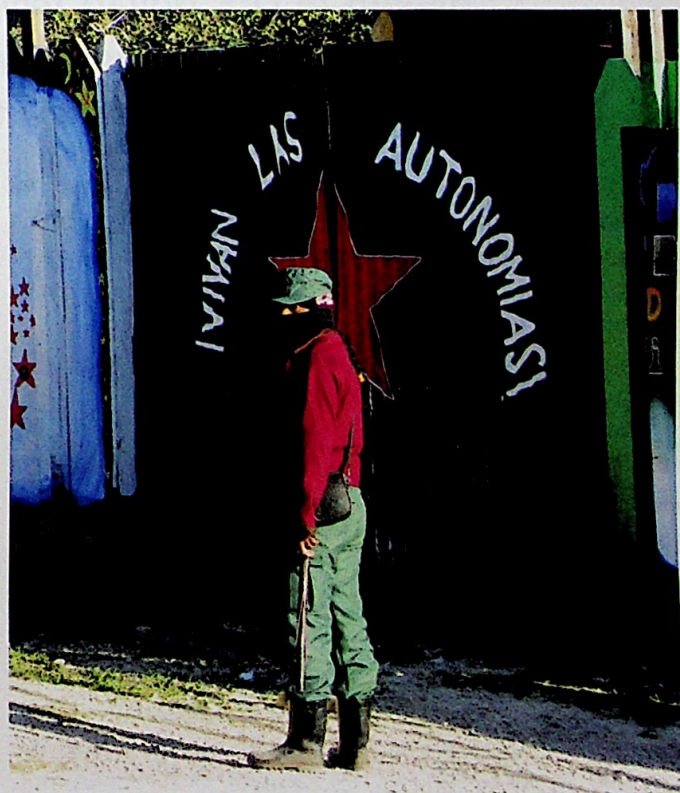
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Speaking on the same panel as Ortiz-Ávila, Anita Clerida, a migrant rights activist working in Chiapas, asks the 40 or 50 people in the room to put up our hands if we know someone who is a migrant. Every hand in the room goes up, a chilling reminder of the scope of the migration crisis throughout Latin America. It's much more difficult for women migrants to find work than it is for men, making their lives especially precarious. Women often migrate to escape domestic violence, hoping for refugee status in the U.S. and Canada, find that they don't

many people disappear trying to migrate through Mexico, but many thousands of them are displaced Indigenous women. To me, the disappearances hauntingly echo the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women here in Canada.

Many of these dynamics of displacement and migration have their roots in agreements like NAFTA, which enshrine neoliberalism in Latin American economic policy. I asked Clerida how these connections work. "These [trade agreement] negotiations only concern commercial interests," says Clerida. "For example, there are many provisions in NAFTA for developing Mexico's agriculture – but it is all industrial agriculture. There is nothing there about the agriculture of the *campesinos*, no protection for peasant agriculture." Without that protection, so-called "development" only intensifies the displacement of Indigenous



A Zapatista woman takes her turn at guard duty near the front gate during the Encuentro. While the soldiers inside the Encuentro were only armed with clubs, fully armed patrols are present throughout the Zapatista territory due to the threat of violence from the Mexican state.



A percussion workshop on the main stage invites players to try different traditional instruments from around Latin America.

and peasant communities.

Clerida also points out that, as part of many of these agreements, billions of U.S. dollars have poured into southern Mexican states like Chiapas for immigration policing, effectively making Mexico's border with Guatemala an extension of the U.S.–Mexico border. I saw it for myself in Chiapas, where highways are diverted through fenced and guarded immigration checkpoints that feel like driving into a jail. Every vehicle must pass through; each is

Billions of U.S. dollars have poured into southern Mexican states like Chiapas for immigration policing, effectively making Mexico's border with Guatemala an extension of the U.S.–Mexico border.

photographed and boarded by armed immigration officials. As a result of this militarization of immigration policing, Clerida tells me that more Central American migrants are deported from Mexico now than from the U.S. Is there anything in the current NAFTA renegotiations to recognize how its neoliberal basis contributes to the migrant crisis and to elevate the rights of migrants in any way? "*Nada*," says Clerida. Nothing.

So if the neoliberal policies that are enshrined in agreements like NAFTA are so harmful to these communities, would it be better if the agreements collapsed completely, as Trump has postured that they might? Mexican activist Carmen Méndez Trejo tells me it's not that simple. "Here in Mexico, for two decades everything has been affected by these agreements." This has entrenched neoliberal policies at all levels of government. Water rights are a good example: due to the provisions of agreements like NAFTA, it's often the case that corporations have more rights to the water in a community than the people who live there. In Baja California, for example, local communities are fighting to stop the construction of a giant bottling facility by Constellation Brands, the parent company of Corona beer, which they fear will suck the already arid Mexicali Valley dry.

Citing this example, where the state government signed the deal with Constellation without consulting the residents, Méndez Trejo points out that state and local governments have no interest in making things better for communities, even if the trade agreements collapsed. "Their neoliberal politics are only concerned with creating benefits for the private sector," she says. "The concerns of the *campesinos* are to recover their land and their territory and their own way of working." She believes that it is the capacity of local communities to resist the power of the private sector that will decide their fate – after three decades, thoroughly "NAFTA-ized" governments aren't going to do it for them.

THE WELLSPRING OF RESISTANCE

The question that brought me to Chiapas in the first place was: what is the secret of the Zapatistas' success? Facing displacement and capitalist exploitation, how have they been able to hold on to their territory and their revolution for more than two decades?

Through collective work to yield food, water, shelter, safety, health care, education, and everything else their communities need, the Zapatistas have found a way to provide for themselves outside of capitalism – a set of social relations that many of us cannot even imagine. Many of the Zapatista women who hosted us for this gathering are in their 20s and 30s. They've lived their whole lives in the *otro mundo*, the other world that we, in our movements here in Canada, always say is possible.

But in Chiapas, it's not just a possibility, it's the world in which the Zapatistas work, live, and raise their children. The *systemo malo*, the bad system, doesn't have control over the daily lives of the Zapatistas. "Our resistance is in cultivating the land," one *compañera* tells me. "It's how we survive." In their farm collectives, the women who are hosting us grew all the food for the gathering: corn, rice, beans, vegetables, chicken, fruit, and more for 5,000 people, in addition to feeding their own communities and producing extra for sale outside of their territories. Being a farmer myself, I'm awed and humbled at this accomplishment and the work it represents. "We found our dignity in the resistance, with collective work," says another *compañera*.

Another reason for their success is the centrality of women in the Zapatistas' movement. Insurgenta Erika, a Zapatista infantry captain who gave the opening address welcoming us to the *Encuentro*, talked about the role of women in the rebellion. "I was born and grew up with the military patrols surrounding our communities and roads," she told us all. She spoke of organizing clandestinely with other Zapatista women – not just making speeches but actually carrying arms and fighting the forces of the Mexican state, with mostly men under their command. "And



"We don't need permission to be free" is painted on one of the dining halls which was used during the Encuentro for film screenings and workshops.

they obeyed us," she told us all, "because what mattered wasn't whether you were a man or a woman but the fact that you were willing to fight without giving up, selling out, or giving in."

It's also more than just the ability of Zapatista women to take on the conventionally masculine role of fighting. Feminized work like growing food and caring for children and elders is valued as highly as fighting, and recognized as part of the revolution. One of the artisans who had brought her work to the *Encuentro* showed me embroidery depicting a masked Zapatista woman working in her garden with a baby – also masked, of course – on her back. "The work of daily life is the wellspring of resistance," it read. How different, I thought, from movement spaces I've been part of in the settler world, where activism is often separated from the rest of life, and the splashiest, most brazen acts get the most credit. When we still depend on the *systemo malo* to provide for our material needs, how can we help but bring that system's brokenness with us into our movements?

There are exceptions, of course: many Indigenous-led movements in so-called Canada begin from a similar place of culture, of sovereignty – and settlers like me can get behind those movements and learn from them as we learned from the Zapatistas' generosity during this *Encuentro*. But the settler world, the dominant culture, has to do more than just let Indigenous folks do the heavy lifting. Settler movements so often try to do our work within the existing social relations of the *systemo malo*.

Grounded in place and focused not on piecemeal reforms but on building an entirely different culture, an entirely different world, the Zapatistas seem to find the strength to hold together in the face of the fiercest opposition. This is a strength that settler movements in the dominant culture desperately need, and that nobody – especially not governments or states – is going to build for us. As one *compañera* told me, "What the bad government does doesn't matter. Our resistance continues." ★



ERIN INNES is a writer, activist, and organic farmer. She lives in a small rural community on the Pacific coast.

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BY JILL MACINTYRE

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN DESROCHES

THE FIGHT FOR FOOD SO

Big agribusiness corporations control the entire food supply chain – from seed to superstore – on

A recently harvested field in Springbrook, overlooking the Cavendish dunes in New London Bay, P.E.I.



SOVEREIGNTY ON P.E.I.

Prince Edward Island. But small family farms are fighting back.



In the pastoral land of red cliffs, lush meadows, and Anne of Green Gables, the small-scale farming for which Prince Edward Island is renowned has been quietly under attack by corporate giants for decades. While tourists may still see a picturesque landscape on the so-called "gentle island," Islanders see farms being foreclosed at an unprecedented rate, fish kills due to the over-application of synthetic pesticides, and our future quite literally receding into the ocean.

Agribusinesses on P.E.I. are often vertically integrated, meaning they "control the seed, the growers, the processing, the trucking, the box-making and all of the pesticides and all of the fertilizers," says Ann Wheatley, an organizer for food justice and migrant worker rights with the Cooper Institute. "There are a couple of the corporations [like Cavendish Farms and McCain Foods] that really have all of those angles covered, so they have complete control and then they also have a lot of political power because they're wealthy," she tells me.

While corporate influence in agriculture is a major problem across Canada, it is particularly apparent in P.E.I., where agriculture and the fisheries are basically our entire economy. In opposition to this corporatization, the fight for food sovereignty has emerged in P.E.I. over the past few decades.

As a movement, food sovereignty

radically undermines the corporate industrial model of agriculture that seeks to eliminate the family farm, destroy our environment in favour of profit, and concentrate control of basic resources in the hands of a few elite players. A concept that originated in the mid-1990s with the Latin American peasant movement La Via Campesina, food sovereignty asserts that the people who produce, distribute, and consume food should have the right to define their own food systems and policies – not corporations and market institutions. Under food sovereignty, everyone should have access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate food that is grown fairly by a community and for a community.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Throughout the mid-20th century, the Western world experienced a fundamental shift in the way we practise agriculture due to changes in technology and post-war food shortages. The green revolution – an attempt at agricultural industrialization and increasing crop yield – encouraged liberal applications of synthetic fertilizers and biocides (pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides), the use of heavy machinery such as large tractors and combine harvesters, and the distribution of genetically altered or hybridized seeds. Power over global agricultural inputs has become increasingly concentrated since the green

revolution, and three companies – Bayer, Syngenta, and BASF – control roughly half of the global agrochemical market. About 80 per cent of U.S. corn and more than 90 per cent of U.S. soybeans are owned by Monsanto, and the company was just acquired by Bayer.

The green revolution has greatly benefited agribusinesses, as fertilizer, seed, and farm equipment companies still capture the majority of agricultural profits in Canada. The total value of all primary agricultural goods produced from 1985 to 2011 in Canada was over three-quarters of a trillion dollars, yet 100 per cent of profits were reaped by agribusinesses, while farmers have seen their net debt increase over the same period.

P.E.I. was slow to adopt green revolution technologies, but passed the Comprehensive Development Plan in 1969, with federal financial support. It sought to “modernize” the P.E.I. economy, and off-Island experts were brought in to eliminate inefficiencies in the agricultural sector. The small-scale family farm

since the early 1970s, a guiding principle remains: Islanders will not accept the corporatization of our province without a fight. However, the power of corporate giants is significant, as potato magnates Cavendish Farms (owned by the vast oil empire, the Irving Group) and McCain began to dominate P.E.I. agriculture in the latter 20th century and brought the corporate, industrial model of agriculture with them. Both of these corporations are based off-Island, meaning that they exploit our land and environmental resources while remitting the profits to mainland investors.

THE DANGERS OF MONOCROPPING

When you think of P.E.I., you think of potatoes. Of the \$497 million that the agricultural sector contributed to the P.E.I. economy in 2013, over half was generated through potato production and distribution. Though the provincial government requires farmers to rotate the location of crops every three years,

“WITH MONOCULTURE POTATOES, I THINK THE WRITING’S ON THE WALL: THEY JUST CAN’T CONTINUE BECAUSE THERE’S NOTHING TO HOLD THEIR SOIL TOGETHER.”

became their target, and legislation was designed to favour large industrial farm operations through subsidization.

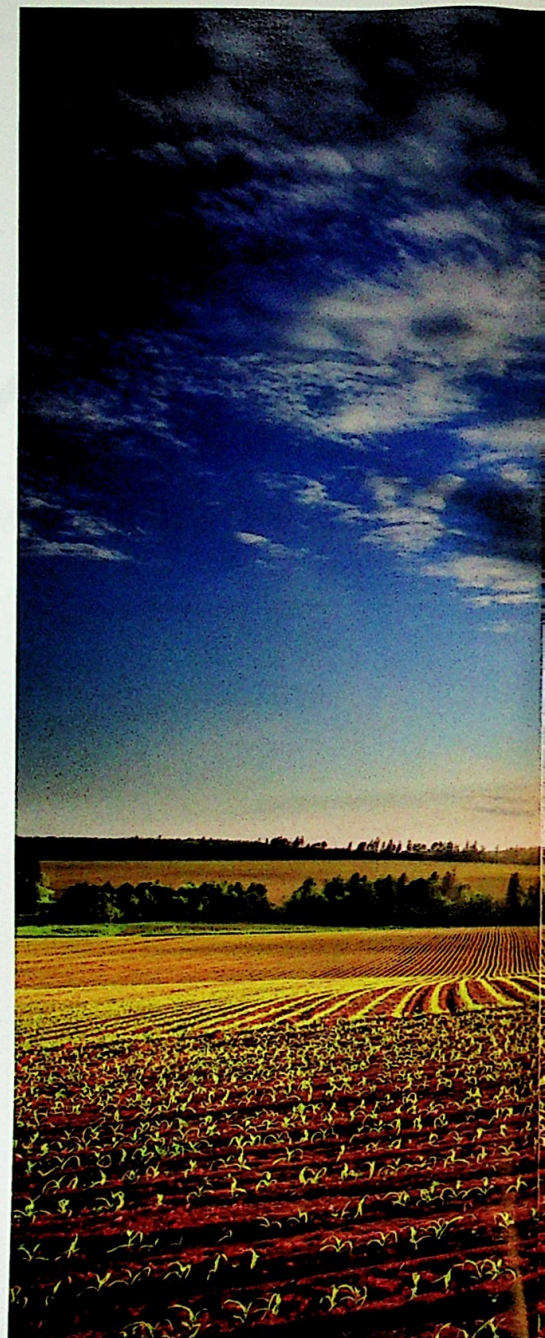
In 1971, during the height of tourist season, thousands of Island farmers blockaded the main highways with their tractors in a protest organized by the National Farmers Union (NFU). After a tense standoff with the RCMP outside of a ferry terminal in Borden, where farmers had formed a human chain to block the terminal, the P.E.I. government agreed to develop legislation protecting the family farm through limiting foreign land ownership and placing an upper acreage limit on farm operations.

While much has changed on P.E.I.

monocropping has still taken an environmental toll. As a root vegetable, potatoes leach nitrogen out of the soil – and the vast acres of potato farms have severely degraded soil quality on P.E.I. over the last twenty years.

Farmers who are forced to work under the corporate model will typically apply massive amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous-based synthetic fertilizers and biocides to the fields to increase crop yield. Corporations like Nutrien – formed from a merger of PotashCorp and Agrium – benefit, while farmers barely scrape out a living.

“If you want to keep your land in good shape you need livestock and their



A newly planted field in Brackley, P.E.I.

manure to be able to have that rotation, and soil with enough organic matter to continue [healthy growth],” Reg Phelan, a seventh-generation organic farmer from Morell, P.E.I., tells me. “With monoculture potatoes, I think the writing’s on the wall: they just can’t continue because there’s nothing to hold their soil together. Some of the measured [soil] runoffs couldn’t find any organic matter in it.”

During rainy P.E.I. summers, runoff from these pesticide-laden fields can enter waterways, killing entire schools of



freshwater fish overnight. Since 1962, there have been 51 pesticide-related fish kills on P.E.I. of various severities. Like a canary in the coal mine, fish kills often serve as indicators of severe environmental distress.

The corporate model of agriculture is also heavily invested in the fossil fuel industry – the Irving Group, for example, operates Canada's largest refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick. And it makes sense that vertically integrated agribusinesses are also invested in oil: the machinery necessary to sustain

and process artificially high crop yields guzzles fossil fuels, and in turn expels vast amounts of carbon dioxide. I don't think it has sunk in yet for most Islanders that, as a low-lying island, we will be among the first in the country to be swallowed by rising sea levels caused by climate change. Although I am only 21 years old, I have already seen our natural landscapes shift and change due to increased erosion. As an Islander, one of my deepest fears is that my home will cease to exist for future generations.

A KEYSTONE INDUSTRY

In the past 50 years alone, the number of potato farms on P.E.I. has decreased from over 5,000 to under 250. In number, farms are shrinking, but in size, they're growing – meaning that fewer Islanders are able to make a living from farming. In a province with some of the highest unemployment and household poverty rates in Canada, the unsustainable future of farming – our keystone industry – is incredibly concerning to Islanders.

According to a farmer from Queens

County, P.E.I., fewer young people on the Island (and across Canada) are getting into farming. "It's related to the huge barriers to entry [for farming] like securing land and equipment, which – even at a small scale – is tens of thousands of dollars of investment just to get started. Sure, people can rent land, but you would

sustainability as a priority. As a certified organic producer, Phelan refuses to use synthetic fertilizers or biocides on his farm, and also tries to limit the amount of water used through irrigation systems. Phelan is also a member of the Seaspray Organics Co-operative, along with the farmers across the road, and together their

to protect the land they farmed, and "for the love of the soil" quickly became their motto. To maintain soil health they apply healthy doses of manure, rotate crops frequently as a natural form of pest management, and apply cover crops during the harsh Island winters to prevent topsoil erosion.

IT IS A FAILURE OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM THAT A CASE OF STRAWBERRIES GROWN FIVE MINUTES FROM MY HOUSE IS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THOSE FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY.

have to know enough to begin with. I think that a [lack] of knowledge and capital – to boil it down – are the two main barriers to entry, but they're really interdependent." This farmer asked to remain anonymous, explaining that he's new to farming and is worried that speaking frankly about its challenges will have negative financial consequences.

The knowledge and capital necessary for successful farming have become concentrated in the hands of a few elites, and our generation is losing our common agricultural heritage. We have acted on the assumption that the corporate industrial food model is here to stay, but something has to give in the current system.

FAMILY FARM FIGHT-BACK

Phelan was born into a farming family. He's an NFU board member and the Atlantic Canadian representative for the international program committee of La Via Campesina. On Phelan's farm, "We grow a lot of different crops because we're looking for a local market," he tells me. "When people go to a market they want a lot of variety, so that's why we [grow] as many as 30 different vegetables. And being diversified on a farming operation is better for the land, better for the [crop] rotation and for [disease resistance]."

Family farmers on the Island are resisting the corporate model through agro-ecology: the recognition that we can, and should, farm with environmental

produce is distributed through farmers' markets and CSA (community-supported agriculture) veggie boxes.

This is a typical market profile for a small organic producer on the Island, as farmers must use a variety of marketplaces to avoid selling to big box grocery stores. While some local farmers sell to the Superstores and Sobeys, larger grocery stores are often unwilling to work with or fairly compensate small-scale organic producers, whose crop yields are less certain. Despite the abundance of fresh local produce on P.E.I., local food options are often more expensive, and big box stores capture most of the market. According to Wheatley, "Another huge challenge is the fact that we have so many people who are living in poverty or close to living in poverty and can't afford to make the kind of food purchasing decisions that are really fundamental to a healthy local food system."

It is a failure of the capitalist system that a case of strawberries grown five minutes from my house is more expensive than those from another country. Many farmers have called upon the provincial government to implement higher minimum wages – which they did, in April – or a basic income program to allow consumers to purchase local, environmentally friendly food.

When Sally Bernard from Barnyard Organics' grain and livestock farm started farming with her partner, they wanted

But strict regulations in Canada surrounding eggs and poultry – designed with large producers in mind – are making it difficult to sell their ungraded eggs or maintain their Rent-the-Chicken program, which provides backyard chickens and supplies to locals for the summer. "We'd rather see 100 farms with 100 or 500 chickens rather than one farm with 500,000 chickens," says Bernard. "Our chickens can be outside running around right now, because we have 160 of them. [...] We're letting things live as they should."

In a recent example of food sovereignty in action, some Mi'kmaq people on the island have started the Three Sisters Teaching and Knowledge Garden on land returned by Sweet Clover Farm in Valleyfield, P.E.I. "Three Sisters" refers to the practice of companion planting used by various First Nations across North America. This garden produces three crops: flint corn, beans, and squash. Corn, which leaches nitrogen from the soil, is interspersed with beans, which naturally replenish nitrogen. Squash provides moisture to the soil, and its broad leaves block sunlight to weeds. According to Jenna Burke, a mentor for Indigenous students at the University of Prince Edward Island who was involved in the project, "There's just a lot of teaching and learning and revival of culture that we can do through just planting seeds – something that we've always done and almost was lost." P.E.I. is the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq, but Mi'kmaq farmers are relatively few, as farmland is typically owned and passed down within settler families due to laws in Canada that restricted First Nations to small reserves of often undesirable land. The recognition that food is sacred is a

primary tenet of food sovereignty, and this garden allows Mi'kmaw gardeners to reclaim their culture and land from settlers.

AGAINST INDUSTRIALIZATION

Randall Affleck, a fifth-generation dairy farmer from Bedeque, joined the NFU as a young farmer in the 1980s. "They did a lot over the years to hold back the tide of industrial agriculture," he tells me.

Of all the agricultural organizations on P.E.I., the NFU is the one that most consistently stands against the total industrialization of Island farms. They were a guiding force behind the landmark Lands Protection Act, which placed strict upper acreage limits on farms. They have consistently called upon the provincial government to stop subsidizing large-scale farming at the expense of family farmers, and have implemented mentorship programs for young farmers, especially young women.

Industrialization is "a big wave, and

farm." A basic income would also allow consumers to make more localized food choices.

The NFU rejects funding from agribusiness corporations, unlike other local farm organizations such as the P.E.I. Federation of Agriculture, whose annual general meeting is sponsored in part by Cavendish Farms. "You can't take their money and kick their arse in," explains Affleck. "So if you identify a problem as a farmer in a rural part of Canada and you're representing farmers and nobody else, you are going to speak truth to power."

FORWARD-THINKING FOOD

The Maritimes is often treated as a footnote to Canada – and as a result, we underestimate our own ability to resist the capitalist system because our resistance does not typically resemble that of urban centres. While we may not picket frequently or lead marches, resistance is taking place in everyday

AS AN ISLANDER, ONE OF MY DEEPEST FEARS IS THAT MY HOME WILL CEASE TO EXIST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

[we] keep losing producers over it," continues Affleck. "I think society will regret that they let that happen in the future. But that's kind of where it's gone – so when the constituency that [the NFU is] representing keeps getting uprooted, it's harder and harder for the organization."

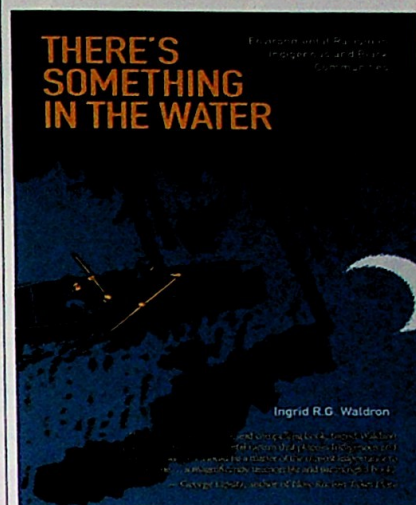
More recently, the NFU has co-operated with local community organizations like the Cooper Institute to campaign for the rights of migrant workers, and for the implementation of a basic income pilot project to combat high poverty rates on the Island. According to Phelan, "the biggest [issue] in farming is that its pay is precarious in terms of what's going to sell, what the prices are going to be – so it's hard for young people to get started and learn the ropes. But if you had a basic income guarantee it would be great for someone getting started with a small

interactions guided by farmers who refuse to see food as a commodity. These are farmers who prioritize the environment and our future, and who reject the corporate model of agriculture even though it often provides a steadier income. P.E.I. is a have-not province, and too often working-class people are convinced that we must work within oppressive systems out of economic necessity, instead of leading an outright revolution ourselves. ★



JILL MACINTYRE is an Islander who recently graduated from Mount Allison University with a degree in international relations. When she isn't studying food sovereignty movements, she enjoys gardening, reading, and swimming in the ocean for hours on end.

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in Indigenous and Black
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by Ingrid R.G. Waldron

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Should unions say no to closed-door negotiations?

Unions in Canada and the U.S. are throwing open the doors to collective bargaining meetings, hoping to win stronger contracts and more engaged members.

BY HANS ROLLMAN
ART BY JAKE GIDDENS

Two teams negotiating behind closed doors. Media blackouts. Gruelling late-night sessions. The culture of secrecy around collective bargaining is well anchored in the public imagination.

But a growing number of unions in both Canada and the United States are bucking the historical trend, throwing the doors open to their full membership in a controversial approach known as open bargaining (or open negotiating). While some union activists cite pitfalls to opening up negotiations, resistance to the old-fashioned, closed-door process is growing in popularity. More unions are taking a chance on the new model, as they see the potential wins of opening negotiation – not just in collective agreements, but in building member engagement during a time of withering unionization rates.

Historically, the North American norm is that unions elect a small bargaining team (often only three or four members), which meets behind closed doors with their employer's bargaining team over the course of several weeks or months. If the two sides reach an agreement, that tentative document is presented to the union's membership to vote on, and this will typically be the first time most members set eyes on it. Open bargaining is defined differently by the various unions that use it, but the goal is to achieve greater transparency around the hitherto secretive bargaining process. In practice, this ranges from openly publishing the union's negotiating proposals to allowing the entire union membership to sit in on negotiations.

The stakes are high. According to Statistics Canada, unionization rates have fallen from 37.6 per cent in 1981 to 28.8 per cent in 2014. While the Canadian workforce is diversifying,

union leaderships remain starkly white, cis, settler, and male, and union memberships are aging rapidly (between 1981 and 2012, unionization rates for the 25-to-44 age group dropped by over 11 percentage points). In the U.S., organized labour has been under legislative attack by state governments and courts through "right-to-work" laws designed to undermine unions' resource and membership bases. In Canada, union solidarity has also been given short shrift – Canada's largest private-sector union, Unifor, quit the Canadian Labour Congress in January and has commenced raiding a U.S.-headquartered international union, UNITE HERE, for members.

Given the grim backdrop, how important is the negotiation process, and how meaningful are the efforts of some unions to revolutionize that process? Labour scholars and activists have never agreed on what formulae are most likely to strengthen workers' movements. But for many of the activists involved, opening up negotiations has had exciting results, ranging from better collective agreements to stronger relationships with the local community. Perhaps most importantly, experiencing change first-hand has been an empowering process for these activists, and one that's strengthened their resolve to be creative and innovative in the struggle to improve workers' rights.

MASSACHUSETTS: "THE BEST CONTRACT THAT WE'VE EVER WON"

Merrie Najimy is a kindergarten teacher in Concord, Massachusetts; she was also president of the Concord Teachers Association when it adopted an open negotiation model.

"I think it's the most powerful way that we've ever bargained,

and we won the best contract that we've ever won," she says.

When her union entered negotiations in 2015, rather than asking their members for proposal ideas through typical bargaining surveys, they asked three simple questions.

"We framed it as 'What brings you joy in the work you do with students?', 'What sucks the joy out of the work you do with students?', and 'What would you like to change through bargaining?'" says Najimy. "We always talk about what the problems are, and it's hard to feel empowered when you only talk about the problems. When you start with your vision, it transforms how you begin to think about the problems and the solutions."

When it came time for negotiations, the union refused to accept the employer's proposed ground rules to keep members out of negotiations. To force the point, they brought 50 members along to their third negotiating session.

Faced with a room full of members, the employer acceded and the two sides agreed they could both invite non-participating guests. The union brought members and parents of students; the

official union representatives could.

"So the members are experiencing themselves as the union, because they're doing union work: members talking to members about negotiations."

TORONTO: "THE NUMBER ONE REASON WE HAVE STRONG COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS"

Megan Hillman is a member of CUPE 3903, the union representing teaching assistants and contract faculty at York University in Toronto. She served on the bargaining team in 2011. While the union has been on strike four times since she became a member, she credits its adherence to the open negotiation model – all negotiating meetings are open to any member to attend – as the reason it has one of the strongest contracts (in terms of wages and benefits) in the sector.

"It means that we have a membership who has ownership over our proposals, and who are invested in things that they may not otherwise have a personal connection to," she explains.

She cites the union's recent demands for breastfeeding facili-

"When the employer has to face the people that they are saying no to, it gets harder to say no."

employer brought managers and elected town officials. To their surprise, Najimy says, the union wound up winning over some of the elected officials.

"The public started to see that teachers are bargaining over things beyond money," she explains. "We were bargaining over a reduction of testing, we were bargaining over teacher influence over curriculum and decisions. That was a winning argument in the community, and what that does is it changes the narrative about 'the greedy teacher' and it changes the narrative that the union exists just to protect that educator."

"When they see the outrageous behaviour of the other side and the dignified behaviour of the teachers, as well as [our] visionary proposals, that's where you win. When you are the visionaries and you are the leaders in public education, you win the public opinion."

What exactly do members *do* when they show up to an open bargaining session? That varies from union to union, but what was common to the unions I spoke with was allowing members to call for a caucus with their negotiating team whenever they want. If they hear misinformation being presented, they can call a caucus to advise their negotiating team. If an important point is being omitted, or if it appears the two sides don't fully understand how a collective agreement clause plays out in real life, members can caucus to share that info. Or if they feel their negotiating team is making a serious mistake or concession, they can caucus to discuss.

An additional benefit, says Najimy, was that members kept each other updated on negotiations, spreading news faster than

ties on campus. When members heard first-hand from other members affected by the issue, this turned a largely ignored equity issue into a focal point for rallies, petitions, and even a "lactation-in" protest and march to the president's office on campus.

Receiving personalized bargaining updates from colleagues who were present strengthens the relationship between the bargaining team and the membership, she feels.

"One of the things about [closed] bargaining itself is [the bargaining team] can get very closed off from the membership, and really conservatized by the process, where all of a sudden that 0.5 per cent wage increase does sound reasonable," she says.

In addition to strengthening the union's ability to identify hidden concessions in the employer's proposals, Hillman feels having a diverse membership in the room renders equity issues like race and gender more prominent and personal; the process keeps them on the agenda more effectively than closed-door negotiating, especially while union leaderships are still predominantly white and male.

"When you are trying to bargain improvements to equity language, it can be very important and very helpful to have a room full of equity seekers," she says, "so that the employer has to face people, and say 'No, we don't think you, as a Black woman, should have more right to a position than the white man.' Or to say 'No, we don't need to make the university more accessible,' to a room of people with mobility devices, who couldn't get into the room. When the employer has to face the people that they are saying no to, it gets harder to say no."

OPEN, BIG, AND REPRESENTATIVE BARGAINING

The experience these unions have had with open negotiating has been positive. Why, then, do relatively few unions use the model? Apart from simply not knowing about it, some activists perceive a sense of mistrust between union leadership and general membership.

Jane McAlevey is a labour scholar and union activist who's been outspoken in calling for unions to open up negotiations, a process she's honed through working with several unions. When she gives presentations about open bargaining, she says she's shocked by how many union officers worry that workers will "get out of control" if invited to negotiating sessions.

"Too many officials have very little faith in the intelligence of ordinary workers who could be involved in the union," she notes. "They'll just say to me 'How did you control everybody?' It's always about control. [...] It's actually just not my experience that this is a problem."

"What open negotiations is not, is chaos. What it is, is incredibly highly disciplined."

McAlevey's approach involves "three rules" for union members attending negotiations: (1) no one talks except the chief negotiator, unless it's planned; (2) poker face at all times; (3) any member can call a caucus with the negotiating team by passing a note to them. (A fourth, unofficial rule she's had to add more recently is: no use of cellphones or social media during negotiating sessions.) She feels open negotiations are "the single best vehicle to build a high-participation union" – an imperative in an era in which unions are under threat.

"It's a way of actually saying to the rank and file, 'We trust you. We think you're smart. We think you should be involved in the single biggest decision that a union [...] is engaged in,'" she says.

ORGANIZING IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST NEGOTIATIONS

Nora Loreto is an editor with the Canadian Association of Labour Media and author of *From Demonized to Organized: Building the New Union Movement*. She warns that while negotiations are important, too many unions wait until negotiation time to actively engage with their members.

"People need to not romanticize [the bargaining] so much," she says. "You cannot have a community approach to bargaining if you don't have community connections outside of bargaining. So you have to start outside bargaining, you have to make sure that your union members are not discovering the union during a moment of crisis."

Loreto cautions that just because bargaining is open doesn't mean it's accessible. "We have to also be realistic about who has the amount of time to sit through endless meetings, and is it really more democratic if you're just opening up the doors to meetings? [...] Are you mobilizing people in the hallways, or is your open bargaining meeting literally the same one hundred people?"

She also points out that there are other ways to be open in

QUOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

"They alone have earned their place in the sun-dome of our future. Black people paid for this country with blood, sweat and tears. To Black mother do I offer a piece of CanAmerica, unconditionally, for she had to sacrifice so many of her finest daughters. With her alone do I strike a partnership, an equal right to re-build a nation more lovely than the settlers can imagine. All others will have to fall in line or be left behind, outside the warm circles of our fires."

—LEE MARACLE, *I AM WOMAN*

"I say all this because hope is not like a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. I say it because hope is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency; because hope should shove you out of the door, because

it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures and the grinding down of the poor and marginal. [...] To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable."

—REBECCA SOLNIT,
HOPE IN THE DARK

"Blatant colonialism mutilates you without pretense: it forbids you to talk, it forbids you to act, it forbids you to exist. Invisible colonialism, however, convinces you that serfdom is your destiny and impotence is your nature: it convinces you that it's *not possible* to speak, *not possible* to act, *not possible* to exist."

—EDUARDO GALEANO,
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Photo by Patrick Kane

negotiating. This can mean brokering workplace policies that protect both union and non-union workers, like health and safety protocols (workplace-wide negotiating can also be a way to push back against privatization, she notes). It can mean developing ways to force the employer to be more active in the community, through designating funds for community improvement, scholarships, or public events.

"When we think about open bargaining, what we really mean is, how do we use the collective power of one group of workers to extend similar kinds or different kinds of new powers or protections to other workers?"

MESSY OR DISCIPLINED?

Not all union activists are sold on the model of open bargaining. Hillman, an advocate of open negotiation, admits "it can be a bit slow and it can be a bit messy and it can be a bit chaotic."

Jessica Wender-Shubow is president of the Brookline Educators Union in Massachusetts, another union that is moving toward open negotiation. She's a supporter, but she's faced arguments against the model.

"The concern about open bargaining is it all becomes about posturing," she says, acknowledging it can undermine the negotiating team's ability to compromise with the employer on issues. The public gaze may make either side feel pressured to act tough. For some activists, that pressure to not compromise is one of the benefits of open negotiating. Others worry it could pose a barrier to meaningful dialogue.

Wender-Shubow's response is that building relationships with union members, and allowing for accountability and trans-

parency is worth the risk and outweighs any possible negatives.

For her, what it comes down to is building a highly mobilized, participatory union. "You need to be able to say, 'If we put out a flyer for a rally [...] can you get 75 per cent of the rank and file to show up?' If you can do that without shifting to an open negotiations process, congratulations. I've never seen it. I've only experienced getting up the negotiations process and showing workers that we don't win without your participation."

NEGOTIATING ACROSS BORDERS

While there are Canadian unions using open negotiating models, much of the recent momentum is coming from American labour organizations. Could the openness of American unions toward the model be less about renewal and radicalism, and more about a last-ditch effort to save themselves?

"One thing that I think Canadian activists don't really get is that a lot of the radical action that we're seeing in the United States is coming out of a place of complete desperation," says Loreto. "It's their only option."

Loreto says Canadian unions still have a range of tools at their disposal – money, collective agreements, strong public institutions like public health care – that American unions no longer have. The demise of American public institutions at the hands of capital has led to a greater sense of despair in that country, she says.

"We can't replicate desperation," she says. "We are confronting capital in a different way. [In Canada] it takes a lot more strategy, it takes a lot more building on the ground to make sure that your membership is ready to take radical action, because a

"Is it really more democratic if you're just opening up the doors to meetings? [...] Are you mobilizing people in the hallways?"

lot of the injustices are a lot harder to see."

But it isn't always leftists who champion open meetings. In other cases, American right-wing organizations, who seek to undermine the strength of collective bargaining, promote open meeting policies as regional ballot-measures. They argue that the "tax-paying public" should have the right to scrutinize negotiations. Yet even these measures may have the unintended side effect of strengthening unions' popular support, some observers suggest. And some provincial and municipal governments, for instance in British Columbia, enact open meeting policies on principles of transparency and open government.

McAlevy, who's worked with both Canadian and American unions, puts less stock in differences between the two countries. While it's true that the Canadian labour relations regime has been better protected by Supreme Court rulings in Canada than its American counterpart, which has seen "right-to-work" laws and other anti-union legislation steadily erode unions' institutional power in that country, she feels the differences are illusory.

Under the old model, she observes, members don't know what's happening until they're presented with a tentative agreement to vote on. This can generate resentment toward the union and its negotiating team if members don't like what they negotiated. But when members have been able to follow the process, "people felt that they did the work that it took to win it and they got what they were expecting."

McAlevy doesn't mince words: "The less people see, the easier it is for you to go cut deals, and do bad things. And I think that's on both sides."

She reminds Canadians that politicians like former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper and former Toronto mayor Rob Ford led concerted attacks on the rights of unions. She says during the eight years of relative labour peace under former Democratic president Barack Obama, American

*"We can't replicate desperation.
We are confronting capital
in a different way."*

unions became complacent and overconfident, and failed to make up for the losses they'd suffered under his Republican predecessors. She worries a similar sentiment now pervades Canadian unions under the federal Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"[Unions] are missing the opportunity to make the kind of demands on the Trudeau government that we need to be making to fix and undo things that Harper was doing," she cautions. "I fear that Canadians might be doing what a lot of unions did here, which is missing an opportunity while there's safety around – meaning there isn't a union-buster in that top position – to actually do the rebuilding of our unions while it's sort of a safe space to do it."

McAlevy feels that Canada is only a few years behind the U.S.

when it comes to the erosion of labour rights and public institutions, and that without a serious change in course its unions will share the fate of their southern counterparts. She fears Canadian unions are making the same mistakes now that American unions made in the early 2000s: failing to experiment with new methods of organizing and negotiating, and failing to co-operate with each other in meaningful ways. She points to the recent division in the Canadian Labour Congress as an example.

"I have a fear for Canada," she says. "There has been a consistent nibbling, if not full bites, taking place province by province, against workers' rights in Canada."

"What Canadians do, I think to your detriment, is compare yourselves to the U.S.," she says. "Well, of course anywhere would look better than the U.S. right now! I always say to people, don't compare yourselves to here! That's the wrong comparison. Compare yourself to your own self 30 years ago. Do your own analysis of how many rights have been taken away."

"What I'm seeing now makes me very nervous for the Canadian context." ★



HANS ROLLMAN is a writer, editor, and broadcaster based in St. John's, NL. He's an editor with TheIndependent.ca, a contributing editor with PopMatters, and program director at CHMR-FM, a community radio station. He has a background in labour organizing, student activism, and archaeology.

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BY LITAL KHAIKIN
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Start-Up Nation, Apartheid State

The myth of “peaceful” R&D in Israel

In 1969, when Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges conducted a 10-day pilgrimage to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, he wrote in his book, In Praise of Darkness,

“You shall be an Israeli, a soldier,
you shall build a country on wasteland.

...

One thing only we promise you –
your place in the battle.”

Where Israeli venture capitalism pursues new frontiers over the wasteland of razed Palestinian towns, a place in the battle is guaranteed even for the wide-eyed, utopian tech entrepreneur. Technological innovation is often seen as a neutral force striving for progress and social good outside of any partisan political agenda. But this erases the politics and power involved in sourcing, producing, investing, and exchanging resources between international collaborators. Israel's high-tech market helps to normalize international relations with its apartheid settler state, rewriting territorial lines and narratives over the very ground in which the fiber-optic cables of private networks are buried.

APOLITICAL R&D

Fringed by a macaron boutique, a non-profit fair trade organization, and a designer baby clothing store, the office of the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF) sits in an innocuous building in Ottawa's gentrified neighbourhood of Westboro Village. Its headquarters in Israel are located near the border with the West Bank, 10 kilometres west of the Palestinian city of Qibya, across the Rantis checkpoint at the separation wall.

Established by the Government of Canada and the State of Israel in 1994 as a bilateral partnership, the CIIRDF brokers partnerships between private-sector high-tech companies in both countries, primarily in research and development (R&D) in fields including biotechnology, cybersecurity and surveillance, oil and gas, agriculture, and medical technology.

The Foundation is under the direction of the Israel Innovation Authority, an institutional branch of the Israeli state previously known as the Office of the Chief Scientist in Israel's Ministry of Economy. The establishment of the CIIRDF anticipated the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement that came into effect in

1997, and which was expanded and modernized in May of 2018, pending ratification by both countries. Companies are selected to partner on research and development based on their scientific and commercial merits, the scope of competing products on the market, and their perceived benefits to Canadian and Israeli economies. Their partnership involves exchanging technology, knowledge resources, and human capital.

The CIIRDF receives what their website calls “base funding of [a] modest \$1 million per year from the Government of Canada and the Government of Israel,” and contributes up to 50 per cent of joint project costs. On the back of this “modest” budget, CIIRDF has invested \$50 million in bilateral R&D projects in the last 20 years that they say “have generated hundreds of millions of dollars in economic value for Canada and Israel.” Additionally, the CIIRDF managed the Canada-Israel Energy Science and Technology Fund (CIEST), which had a total operating budget of \$11,718,000 between 2013 and its conclusion in 2016. Of that, \$5 million came from the Canadian government through Natural Resources Canada, with “matching funds [...] allocated by the Israel Innovation Authority.”

In 2010, Israeli news site *Ynet* reported that the Tel Aviv tourism board launched an \$88 million campaign to turn the city into "an international gay vacation destination," sparking criticisms of Israel's "pinkwashing" – self-consciously branding the country as LGBTQ-friendly to imply a contrast with neighbouring Arab countries, and deflect criticisms of its occupation of Palestinian lands. It's been followed by other PR campaigns designed to soften Israel's international image, like Project Anathot, which boasts the inclusion of disabled youth in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Now, with the help of the CIIRDF,

NOW, WITH THE HELP OF THE CIIRDF, ISRAEL IS STYLING ITSELF AS AN OASIS OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION.

Israel is styling itself as an oasis of technological innovation – on top of pinkwashing, we are seeing the techwashing of the Israeli state. Each is an effort to legitimize or distract from Israel's human rights abuses of Palestinian people.

There are many complicated military, institutional, state, and private threads that link the CIIRDF and its partners to their support for various facets of Israel's apartheid. However, this article is simply an introduction to the military-industrial complex that underlies Israeli R&D partnerships, encouraging readers to question the representation of the Israeli tech economy as progressive and humane.

PEACEFUL APPLICATIONS

The CIIRDF's Information Handbook for applicants writes that "projects or technologies that may have military/non-peaceful applications are not eligible" to solicit funding. This implies that collaboration between Canadian and Israeli companies has no bearing on Israel's militarized occupation of Palestinian land, nor any relevance to Canada's ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples.

The occupation and the war industry have been central to Israel's economy since the formation of the Israeli state and concurrent establishment of the IDF in 1948. Israel's 2019 military budget grosses 22.7 billion Canadian dollars (63 billion Israeli shekels). Israel's mandatory military service, which requires Israeli citizens over the age of 18 to serve in the IDF, funnels conscripts into technology and engineering programs like Mamram (the IDF Center of Computing and Information Systems) and Basmach (the IDF Academy for Computer Science and Cyber Defense), Talpiot (scientific research for the IDF), and Havatzalot (Military Intelligence). CIIRDF president and co-founder Henri Rothschild, in an address to Canada's Standing Committee on Finance last year, referred to IDF soldiers when he praised "the particular talent that emerged from the specialized training that the brightest of them received in the course of their national service."

In turn, the Israel Innovation Authority, which funds the

CIIRDF and oversees numerous R&D programs within Israel and internationally, was founded in 1965 as the Office of the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Economy. This position was first held by Brigadier General Itzhak Yaakov, one of the founders of Israel's weapons development program. Yaakov was convicted in 2002 of divulging secrets, to his contacts and in his drafted memoirs, around Israel's nuclear development, which, during the 1960s and the Six-Day War, ran the Negev Nuclear Research Center and is believed to have been involved in producing Israel's nuclear weapons. Currently, the Innovation Authority is led by Aharon Aharon, a former CEO of Apple Israel and veteran of the IDF's elite Intelligence Unit 8200, a "signals intelligence" unit that seems to be largely for hacking, decryption, and cyberwarfare. In 2014, 43 veterans and reservists of Unit 8200 wrote an open letter to Netanyahu and military chiefs, revealing the unit's practices of collecting personal information on Palestinian civilians living under occupation that is "used for political persecution and to create divisions within Palestinian society."

The CIIRDF's goal is to develop technologies for the improvement of the quality of life. But whose lives are they improving? Israeli R&D companies and their Canadian collaborators that appear to work toward clean energy or life-saving medical technologies are part of an economic infrastructure that both extends the physical occupation of Palestine and normalizes the inevitability of the Israeli state.

PARTNERS IN MILITARIZED APARTHEID

One of the CIIRDF's most vaunted medical partnerships is between the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) and the non-profit Israel Brain Technologies (IBT). IBT was founded by investor Rafi Gidron, with the vision of turning Israel into a world brain-tech leader. IBT's board of directors includes some elite IDF credentials: in particular, board director Daniel Gold is the current head of the Israel Ministry of Defense (IMOD) Directorate of Defense Research and Development, and head of Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure.

According to IBT's website, Gold "was responsible for the State of Israel's military research and development policy,"

THE CIIRDF'S GOAL IS TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE. BUT WHOSE LIVES ARE THEY IMPROVING?

and "invented and managed [...] Iron Dome, the mobile air-defense system that addresses the short-range rocket threats to populated areas in Israel." The Iron Dome Weapon System is a radar-guided missile defence system using Tamir interceptor missiles, developed by Gold through Israeli military company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems (RAFAEL), and funded by the United States. Implemented in 2011, the Iron Dome was notably used in the 2012 "Pillar of Defense" airstrike operation against

the Gaza Strip that killed 167 Palestinians, 87 of whom were civilians, according to Israeli NGO B'Tselem. The operation led to reports by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch that Israel had "failed in many instances to respect international law" by targeting civilians.

Daniel Gold's Iron Dome system was separately brokered by the CIIRDF in 2015, in a partnership between Canadian construction and engineering firm EllisDon and RAFAEL. With a grant of \$1 million through the CREST, RAFAEL and EllisDon would develop a smart electrical grid for the city of Guelph, in southern Ontario, based on the Israeli radar and the "command and control, and situational awareness capabilities developed for the defence sector." The development of an electricity grid in Guelph using Israeli military technology not only allows Israeli investors to "capitalize on this and other global smart grid markets," as RAFAEL's executive vice president, Roni Potasman, noted, but normalizes the application of technology developed by and for an apartheid state, as if the technology is rendered peaceful when applied to sustainable energy systems.

Despite the CIIRDF's own criteria that there are "no negative human rights implications associated with the project," the Foundation will still partner with companies that supply military technologies to the Israeli police and the IDF. One notable CIIRDF partner is Elbit Systems, a private Israeli military technology company that manufactures weapons, cybersecurity and surveillance technologies, and unmanned military aircraft. Elbit is currently in the final stages of buying IMI Systems, the Israeli state-owned weapons manufacturer known for making Uzi submachine guns, for \$523 million.

In March, it was announced that the CIIRDF would be partnering with Afcon Holdings, described as a "cleantech automation firm" that "establishes wind turbine farms." This description ignores Afcon Holdings' projects in constructing military bases and ammunition bunkers, and the fact that it provides metal detectors to the IDF to use at military checkpoints in the occupied territories and along the border with Gaza. Though the partnership was initially approved, the CIIRDF is no longer working with Afcon, and has removed the company from their website.

NEW FRONTIERS OF OCCUPATION

In recent years, Tel Aviv has been prophesized as "the next Silicon Valley," even promoting Taglit-Birthright Israel tech tours that involve "hack-a-thons" at Google's Tel Aviv campus. Tel-Aviv's nearby suburbs like Petah Tikva, Herzliya, and Ra'anana are home to the offices of technology multinationals like Intel, Apple, and Hewlett-Packard, creating a tech hub known as "Silicon Wadi." But many of these Silicon Wadi companies have now set their sights on the Negev Desert in south Israel. With Elbit's purchase of IMI, for example, the weapons manufacturer intends to relocate from the tech bubble of Ramat HaSharon, outside Tel Aviv, into Ramat Beka in the Negev.

Israel's existing kibbutzim (collective settlements) in the

Sha'ar HaNegev region of the Negev, on the border with Gaza, are home to organizations like SouthUp, which aim to attract high-tech companies to their communities. They partnered with Hamashtela Foundation to create a tech kibbutz fund to help "agriculture tech, water tech, kibbutz industrial development, energy, chemistry, biology, and software" companies establish themselves in local kibbutzim. The Israeli state's vision is to construct 11 new towns in the Negev and double the region's population by 2035, "in part for career IDF officers who would move south along with key army facilities."

The Negev is the ancestral home of the traditionally nomadic Bedouin. Since the establishment of the Israeli state, the Bedouin have been subject to eviction and land expropriation. Their villages have been bulldozed in the West Bank's Israeli-controlled Area C and resettled into closed military zones. In a move that evokes Canada's reserve system for First Nations, the Israeli government has begun "legalizing" previously illegal Negev Bedouin homes while denying recognition of the Bedouin people's claims to ownership of the land, and establishing Bedouin

MANY OF THESE SILICON WADI COMPANIES HAVE NOW SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE NEGEV DESERT IN SOUTH ISRAEL.

towns that are subject to Israeli legislation and authority. This move ultimately strips the traditionally nomadic Bedouin of rights to the land and autonomy from the state of Israel.

In establishing tech-oriented settlements in the Negev, the Israeli state draws on a mythology of technological "pioneering" and industrialist "innovation" to invoke nationalist sentiment. There is a terrible irony in developing so-called "peaceful technologies" out of the militarized mechanisms of a state that, so far in 2018, has killed over 100 Palestinians and injured thousands more, continues to displace Bedouin in the Negev, and continues to encroach on Syria.

Where human dignity and the very right to exist are assaulted by the Israeli state, Canada must be held accountable for its complicity. It is not enough to condemn only the most obvious forms of violence for which Israel is responsible; it is equally important to challenge and resist pernicious forms of violence that cloak themselves in words of "peace" and "sustainability." What is defined as a peaceful application of technology, when all applications normalize the foundational violence of the Israeli apartheid state? Where there is illegal settlement, there is no peace. ★



LITAL KHAIKIN writes in and outside of Montreal. She is the author of *Outplace* (Solar Luxuriance, 2017) and a *flight of objects that seemed real* (forthcoming). Her writing can be found at 3:AM Magazine, continent., Queen Mob's Tea House, Berfrois, Black Sun Lit, the Brooklyn Rail, and REDEFINE Magazine. She also runs a small literary press called The Green Violin.



We Interrupt This Program: Indigenous Media Tactics in Canadian Culture

By Miranda J. Brady and John M.H. Kelly

UBC Press, 2017

REVIEWED BY GREG MACDOUGALL

We *Interrupt This Program* is a hopeful title for a timely book.

Focusing on the past 10 years, authors Miranda Brady and John Kelly examine how Indigenous media-makers of various forms are disrupting the neocolonial Canadian media terrain to assert Indigenous priorities, cultures, and aesthetics. Both authors are professors at Carleton University; Brady is a settler who studies Indigenous identities and media; Kelly is Haida from Skidegate, and worked in journalism prior to academia.

The authors chose to look primarily at interventions within dominant (non-Indigenous) media spaces, particularly established institutional frameworks. One perspective they present – referencing Taiaiake Alfred, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Glen Coulthard – argues that Indigenous priorities of reasserting sovereignty and nationhood are incompatible with working within settler-controlled institutions. But the authors explain that they're interested in interventions that combine acceptance with refusal, and tactics of media-making that "may not lead to a radical transformation [...but] can elicit results."

Most of the chapters centre around case studies. The first two cases, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and IsumaTV, discuss residential school testimonies, methods of documentation, and archives. The authors contrast the short "wrongdoing-focused" public testimonies of the TRC with IsumaTV's hour-plus online recordings of Inuit residential school survivors. In the latter, testifiers were encouraged to discuss in depth the impacts of the schools on collective life. In contrast, the TRC testimonies had strict time limits – causing one commissioner to remark, "We're starting to pick up the habits of our white brothers." The IsumaTV testimonies were an

The authors explain that they're interested in interventions that combine acceptance with refusal, and tactics of media-making that "may not lead to a radical transformation [...but] can elicit results."

external method for Inuit people to assert their needs within the framework of the TRC, and helped get an Inuit sub-commission in the TRC. These chapters also discuss the uncertain futures of the archives, in part due to challenges with funding.

The third chapter highlights three Indigenous artists who are challenging non-Native representations of Indigenous peoples: Dana Claxton, Jackson 2bears, and Kent Monkman. Their work acts to remediate existing media norms and historical art, exposing the mechanics behind settlers' stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples.

The fourth chapter focuses on the imagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival in Toronto and filmmakers Jeff Barnaby, Terril Calder, and Shane Belcourt. The festival's success is attributed to its ability to build community and supportive, inclusive networks, and to provide essential exposure for diverse media-makers. The festival helps Indigenous filmmakers confront their main barriers within the film industry: financing, cultural misconceptions, access to industry partners and networks, and distribution.

The book doesn't explore social media, though it was conceived and grew rapidly in the decade this book covers. Without it, the book has less sense of the real-time implications of Indigenous media making, including its role in facilitating social movements like Idle No More and #NoDAPL.

The final chapter looks at mainstream journalism, via the perspective of Duncan McCue, a long-time CBC reporter and a journalism professor at the University of British Columbia. McCue discusses the under- and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in mainstream journalism, and the need to move beyond reporting that evokes pity, or pits Indigenous people against settlers. For journalists covering Indigenous issues, McCue advises, "If you could boil down my whole course down to one thing, it's to act with respect."

The book doesn't explore social media, though it was conceived and grew rapidly in the decade this book covers. Without it, the book has less sense of the real-time implications of Indigenous media-making, including its role in facilitating social movements like Idle No More and #NoDAPL.

As the authors note, Indigenous peoples' relationships to

media have evolved as "colonization happened synchronously with the development of a number of media technologies, including photography and motion pictures." The recent and dramatic collective shift in our relationships to media has occurred alongside a significant shift in Indigenous relations with settler society – during an age of so-called "reconciliation" and increased visibility of Indigenous perspectives, including dissent. The book provides an analytical perspective to help readers reflect on what types of new interruptions may be brewing – or to plan the interventions themselves. ★

GREG MACDOUGALL is a non-Native media-maker and organizer based in Ottawa. Some of his work is available at EquitableEducation.ca. Most recently he's been involved in helping to start the Algonquin Anishinaabeg Aki Media Project.

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SUSTAINER PROFILE #51

MELANIE HANKEWICH



Melanie Hankewich was born and raised in Saskatchewan. After living in Western Canada and Australia, she settled in Regina ten years ago, and became a touring musician.

Have you always worked in the arts?

Yup! I've been a lighting technician at a professional theatre, stage manager in children's theatre, office manager at a recording studio, a voiceover artist, and a jingle singer. These days I'm a full-time touring musician, playing under the stage name Belle Plaine. I've been touring a lot through America in the last year – mostly around the southern Appalachian region. I pointed my nose south to anticipate the release of my second studio album later this year, *Malice, Mercy, Grief and Wrath*. Most of my life is spent travelling these days, which suits me fine.

What's inspiring (or challenging) you artistically, these days?

I love to settle into songwriting when I have a great story to tell. I tried to look outside of my experience for the new album; there's only one song about being a touring musician, which is an accomplishment in itself! My favourite song on the album is about my grandmother surviving a collision with a train in the 1980s. It's called "Laila Sady Johnson Wasn't Beaten By No Train," and I wanted it to have a legendary quality to it, like "Big Bad John" by Jimmy Dean or the poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert W. Service. It took four months to write, but now that it's done my grandmother and my family can claim it as part of our shared story. It's evidence of how much my family adores our matriarch.

Do you ever take a copy of *Briarpatch* with you on tour, and why do you support *Briarpatch*?

I do! They have to come along so that they get read. Sometimes I leave them places along the way. It would be fun to do more of that, honestly – like, by-accident-on-purpose. I support *Briarpatch* because it educates me. It opens up my understanding of other people's struggles, and causes me to evaluate my perspective. I'm especially grateful for legitimate journalism.

The automatic monthly donations of the following Sustainers provide *Briarpatch* with a welcome source of stable, ongoing revenue.

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Against Performative Sharing

If you're gonna plaster my newsfeed with photos of dead Indigenous youth, you better show up to the vigil.

In the first few months of 2018 we saw two trials take place and culminate with devastating outcomes. Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine, two young Indigenous people, both lost their lives at the hands of white violence. Both of their murderers were acquitted. The trials of their killers brought to light the explicit and insidious racist beliefs that exist inside our media, our "justice" system, and society at large.

During the time of the trials, my social media was awash with articles and photos of Boushie and Fontaine, with headlines that turned my stomach. It is hard to express the feelings of immense pain that occur when images of people who resemble those you love are accompanied by racist allegations and ignorant statements. But this is not the first time I saw a sudden surge of settlers posting images of Indigenous pain. During the #NoDAPL and Water Is Life protests, I was forced to see Indigenous bodies being attacked by police over and over again on my newsfeed. I noticed the same patterns when it came to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people; residential schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and police brutality and harassment. It started to feel more like a colonial fetish for witnessing Indigenous torment than genuine commiseration.

Then, when vigils and round dances were held for Boushie and Fontaine, hardly any of the settlers who posted these images on my timeline showed up. Too many non-Indigenous folks were happy to broadcast their shock and dismay over the injustice Indigenous people experience, but it was almost exclusively Indigenous communities who came together to fight for justice.

I call this "performative sharing": when the act of posting potentially upsetting material takes place without consideration of how the article, image, or video might affect individuals who see their communities – or own selves – represented.

As my friend, Kaila JM, tweeted, "Please non-Indigenous folks, I do not need y'all to engage w me about Indigenous justice. I already KNOW of the injustices; I am hurt but I'm not shocked. We don't need to be reminded of your surprise in learning modern colonialism is pervasive."

There are many legitimate reasons why someone wouldn't make it to an action or vigil – like work, school, poor mental health, or an inaccessible venue. But there are hundreds of different vigils and actions held across the year in any given city that speak to these systemic issues, and thousands of variations

on ways that settlers can meaningfully challenge colonialism. At some point, your absence is noticed.

Sharing articles about injustice or violence one has never personally experienced is not *inherently* wrong or problematic. But performative sharing happens when it becomes the end of one's assumed work, and serves to relieve one's guilt or burnish one's politics. It is the act of posting and sharing these issues without engagement that becomes performative. It is the appearance of awareness, appearance of activism, and appearance of care that leads to harm, when none of these performances manifests in action.

This is not just an issue that impacts Indigenous people – others have written about North America's love of broadcasting viral videos of Black people being brutalized by the police, which is rooted in a history of white people attending lynchings as if they're concerts. In the 19th century, hyper-visible violence like lynchings was a strategy to suppress dissent among enslaved people.

Today, marginalized people who experience their community's

pain being broadcasted are left to do the hardest work of cleaning up racism. This happens when "good" settlers tag Indigenous people in racist posts, adding comments like "can you believe they think like this? Good thing I'm not one of *them*." It's a means of the privileged deflecting labour back to the marginalized. It puts marginalized folks in the path of racism – directly threatening their safety and well-being – instead of white people and settlers

It puts marginalized folks in the path of racism – directly threatening their safety and well-being – instead of settlers doing the work of quietly challenging the racism themselves.

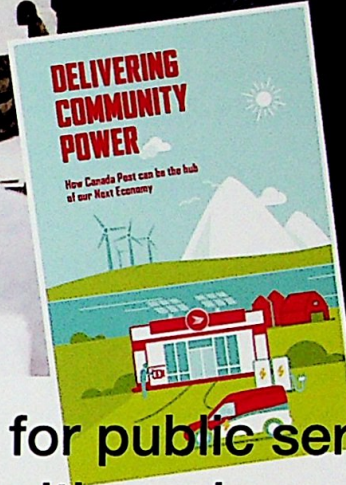
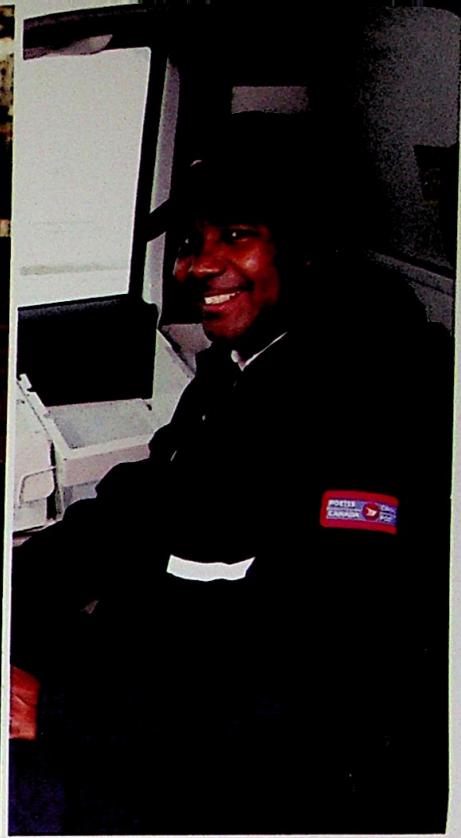
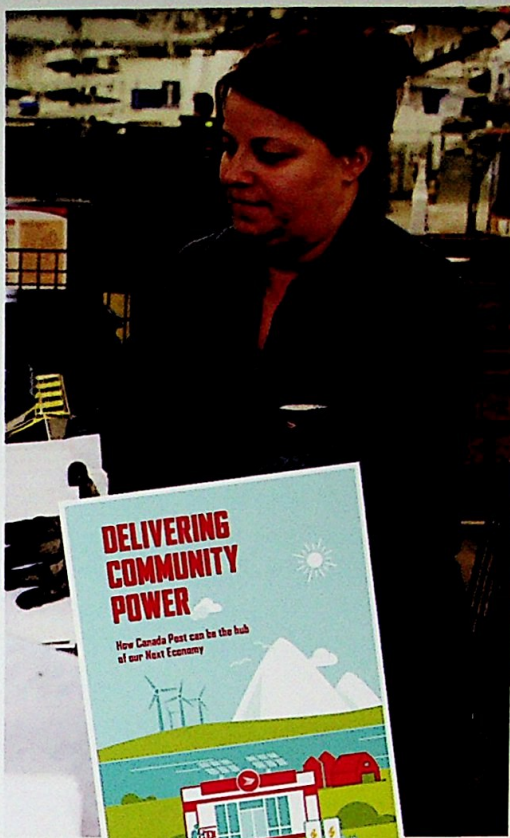
doing the work of quietly challenging the racism themselves.

Anyone – regardless of race, gender, or age – can perform in this way, though what unites performative sharers is a level of privilege that allows them to turn away from the issue after leaving their screen.

For the most part, social media allows for unprecedented power in organizing and educating ourselves, but it also permits shallow, fair-weather involvement with politics. So I will leave you with these steps: engage, internalize, question, and critique yourself. Ask why, and do not perform care until you are ready to deliver on it. ★



EMMA STEEN got her BA in art history from NSCAD University and will begin her master's in contemporary art history with a focus in Indigenous art history and visual culture at OCAD University this fall. Emma is currently working with the Inuit Art Foundation in Toronto.



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